Acton. c. 8. 178.

A HISTORY

OF

THE PRESBYTERIAN

AND

GENERAL BAPTIST

CHURCHES

IN THE

West of England;

WITH

MEMOIRS OF SOME OF THEIR PASTORS.

BY

JEROM MURCH,

MINISTER OF TRIM STREET CHAPEL, BATH.



LONDON:

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1835.

See 138...75

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PREFACE.

VARIOUS circumstances induced me, some years since, to form a plan of a history of the Presbyterian and General Baptist Churches in the West of England.

No work of the kind existed. There were histories of the Puritans—of their successors, the original Nonconformists—and of a third class, still more friendly to liberty of conscience—the Unitarians of the sixteenth and two following centuries. But, with the exception of Mr. Wilson's History of the London Dissenting Churches, there was no series of records of our congregations, no collection of memoirs of their pastors, and consequently no adequate means of tracing the growth and operation of the principles for which Puritans, Nonconformists, and Unitarians were all, more or less, distinguished.

Many Dissenters were anxious that this desideratum in our literature should be supplied. From

time to time interesting accounts of ancient societies were drawn up by their ministers, and published in the periodical works of the day. Other ministers collected information which remained imperfect, and therefore unpublished, in consequence of the difficulty of obtaining a general knowledge of the requisite facts. Fourteen years ago, the Rev. Edmund Butcher, of Sidmouth, sent an interesting communication to the Monthly Repository, in which were the following remarks: "What Mr. Wilson has done for the London churches, I wish some other friend to the noble cause of conscientious Nonconformity would do for the kingdom at large, at least for England and Wales; and, in order to furnish materials for such a work, I propose, what might very easily be accomplished, that every Dissenting minister should draw up, and send to the Repository, a concise account of the church of which he is minister, ascertaining, where it can be done, the earliest date to which the existence of the society can be traced, the names they have borne at different periods, where any change has taken place, a list of their ministers, how long they occupied their respective places, where they removed to, if they did not continue their services in any one congregation for the residue of their lives—with an account of the literary productions of such of them

as appeared before the public as authors, and any well-authenticated and important particulars concerning them or the churches to which they belonged."*

This proposal did not meet with the response which it deserved. If Mr. Butcher had been longer spared, he would probably have employed other means of interesting his brethren on its behalf. He died in the following year; and his plan "of preserving the names and labours of many excellent individuals from total oblivion," was never carried into effect. A few years afterwards, some attention was excited by an anonymous book, entitled "The Manchester Socinian Controversy," with an appendix containing a list of Unitarian Chapels. The Editors professed to state the origin and other particulars of many of the societies; but the information was scanty and inaccurate, seldom obtained from the proper sources, and obviously designed to answer a sectarian purpose. Yet the account was widely circulated; it was reprinted in America, and conveyed to many in that country their present ideas of the history of the churches in question,† whilst in England it tended largely to produce

* Monthly Repository, Vol. xvi. p. 525.

† See the Christian Examiner, published at Boston, U. S. Vol. iii. p. 430.

an impression peculiarly injurious to the interests of Truth. Its publication was speedily followed by those legal proceedings, still continued, the object of which appears to be not only to deprive a few gentlemen of an important trust, which they and their ancestors have executed with the strictest fidelity upwards of a century, but also to prepare the members of the same denomination throughout the country, for the assertion by "the orthodox" of a general claim upon their endowments and places of worship. Into the particulars of this question I must not be tempted to enter. My object is simply to shew the *necessity* of diffusing information concerning the history of the Presbyterian and General Baptist Churches.

With high opinions of the importance of the task, I entertained others, by no means inferior, as to the requisite qualifications of the labourer. And I may say with perfect sincerity, that I felt I should be chargeable with an undue degree of presumption, in undertaking an office for which many others were far better prepared. I knew that there were authors of established reputation, not only intimately acquainted with the subject, but possessing an influence which might facilitate their researches, and an experience which might inspire confidence in their judgment. I was also aware

that there was at least one, among these gentlemen, who could have pursued the task, not at intervals, "few and far between," of the labours of the Christian ministry,—labours unrivalled in urgency and importance,—but day after day and week after week, with the advantages of almost unbroken application. Nor did I forget that such a work would unquestionably secure greater attention if written without that attachment to the faith of the churches, and that strong desire for their prosperity, which, I confess, I deem it my duty to cherish. There was, however, no probability that the work would be undertaken by others; for this reason I ventured to engage in it; my removal to Bath, about two years since, enabled me to collect materials with comparatively little difficulty; and in proportion as my brethren in the ministry became acquainted with my design, their friendly communications afforded me an encouragement greater than I had presumed to anticipate.

It will be perceived that I have contented myself, in many cases, with recording the most important events. I have, of course, invariably aimed at the strictest accuracy; but it will, probably, be discovered that in some instances I have been mistaken. The candid reader will remember that the volume contains many hundreds of dates and names ob-

tained from widely different sources; and that efforts, however persevering, to supply deficient, and reconcile conflicting statements must sometimes prove unsuccessful. On subjects of minor importance I have often refrained from entering into minute particulars; the similarity in the histories of the congregations was so great as to render it difficult to afford sufficient information and yet avoid wearying the attention of the reader. Whilst, therefore, I have enlarged occasionally upon general historical facts, and noticed, at some length, the peculiar circumstances of several societies, I have passed as lightly as possible over the characteristics which are common to all. A similar remark applies to the memoirs of the ministers. Here, perhaps, an apology is necessary to the authors whose contributions I have abridged. I believe it will be found, that the facts omitted were either noticed elsewhere, or would have prevented the introduction of others more interesting. In making selections for the biographical department, I have been guided by a desire to convey a correct general impression as to the talents and characters of the Western Pastors. And although I have not unfrequently noticed the failings incidental to human nature, I may venture to anticipate both for ministers and people a verdict corresponding to that of the immortal Milton, in

reference to an earlier race:—"It cannot be denied that the authors, or late revivers of these sects, were learned, worthy, zealous, and religious men, as appears by their lives; and the same of their many eminent and learned followers, perfect and powerful in the Scriptures, holy and unblameable in their lives."*

My plan originally included two introductory chapters on the Origin and Early Progress of the Presbyterian denomination. These I have omitted in consequence of the accumulation of other materials, and the recent appearance of two excellent pamphlets.† But I cannot satisfy myself without offering a few observations on the title I have chosen, and particularly on the use of the term Presbyterian. It has been remarked that few, if any, congregations in the West of England are now *commonly* called Presbyterian, and that several, of recent origin, have been always denominated Unitarian. These are well known facts; nor have I the slightest wish to promote, either the general resumption of a term which does not now indicate our belief in certain important doctrines, or the aban-

* Milton on Heresy and Schism.

† "An Historical Defence of the Trustees of Lady Hewley's Foundations, by the Rev. Joseph Hunter, F. S. A."; and "The History, Opinions, and Present Legal Position of the English Presbyterians, published under the direction of the English Presbyterian Association."

donment of another which unquestionably answers this purpose. It must be remembered, however, that a large majority of the congregations noticed in these pages are of Presbyterian *origin*, that this was their usual appellation for upwards of a century, that the same is still frequently given to them and their chapels in legal documents, and that they are as fairly entitled to it now, as were their venerable founders and more recent benefactors. For upwards of a century and half, the term English Presbyterian has not signified—the Christian who, in religious matters, is governed by a Synod and believes the doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, and Original Sin;—it is true that customs have been voluntarily retained in our churches, with regard to the allotment of certain offices to Presbyters or Elders;—but the title was chiefly gloried in by our fathers, because it indicated their union with a body of Protestant Dissenters, bound by no fetters with regard to church fellowship, and left, by their trust deeds, at perfect liberty to search for truth wherever it could be found. The constitution of the societies which have recently arisen in the West of England, and have consequently been always called Unitarian, is distinguished by the same characteristics;—their faith is also the same as that of the older congregations; it was both

natural and proper that the zeal which led them to secede from Trinitarian worship, should also lead them to adopt the appellation most decidedly expressive of the grounds of their secession; all, however, who hold their leading doctrines, whether called Presbyterian, Unitarian, or General Baptist, associate with perfect harmony, and may be considered as forming but one branch of the Christian church.

The following pages will scarcely be perused by *many* who are unacquainted with the doctrines alluded to. Some reader, however, may repeat the exclamation made a few years since, by a venerable Lord Chancellor, "I should be glad to be informed what a Unitarian is!"* I shall therefore state the leading articles of our faith,—concluding with the words of Dr. Taylor—one of the brightest ornaments of the Presbyterian denomination.

We believe that it is life eternal to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. We believe that God is the Merciful and Impartial Parent of mankind, and ever ready to give good things to those who ask for them. We believe that He is the One Supreme Being, whom we are commanded to worship in spirit and in truth, and that in offering our adorations to Him alone, we humbly

* Speech of the Earl of Eldon, in the House of Lords.

follow the example and obey the instructions of Christ himself. We believe in the Holy Spirit—meaning thereby those miraculous endowments and inspirations which dwelt without measure in Jesus, and in different measures in the Apostles, also those various degrees of power and wisdom which good men of all ages have derived from their ordinary communion with God. We believe that to love the Lord our God with all our hearts and our neighbour as ourselves, is of the highest importance; that although faith and hope are unspeakably valuable, charity is greater still; and that we ought to aim constantly at being one with Christ, and with our fellow-disciples in the same manner as Christ was one with the Father. "What the Scriptures reveal" (says Dr. Taylor*) "concerning the Son of God, we acknowledge and believe. We own him in all his offices of prophet, priest, and king, as the one Mediator between God and man, our Advocate and Intercessor, the surety of a better covenant, the Captain and Author of our Salvation, the only name under heaven by which we can be saved, and who can save to the uttermost. We are assured of his incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension to heaven, where he is at the

* Defence of the Common Rights of Christians, first published in 1737, and republished by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association in 1829.

right hand of God, exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, and from whence he will come at the great day to judge both the living and the dead. We believe all that he hath himself reported, whether by his own mouth or the mouth of his holy apostles, concerning his person, nature, perfections, his offices and works. We take him as he is described in revelation; we change nothing of the gospel; designedly and knowingly we add nothing, we diminish nothing, but leave every thing to stand just as it is in the word of God."

I have already confessed that I desire the welfare of the churches maintaining these doctrines. Whether I have allowed this circumstance to influence unduly the following narratives, it is not for me to determine. One thing is certain;—if I had hoped to convey a favourable idea of the energy of our body, or of its numerical strength, I must soon have laid down my pen in despair. I readily admit that although there has been a general improvement in our congregations within the last few years, a faithful review of their history, in point of numbers, is far from gratifying. It appeared to me that this fact was not sufficiently borne in mind by Unitarians themselves,—that they peculiarly required to be acquainted with the history of these societies —with the causes of their original prosperity and

their subsequent decline—with the means which have been employed where a revival has been produced, or where a depression continues. Setting aside the general value of such records, I could not avoid hoping that a calm review of the changes which have occurred during a period of one hundred and fifty years, would excite many useful reflections in the minds of those who have the care of the present congregations, and who are desirous of witnessing—not the progress of sectarian opinions, not the increase of party zeal and party influence, but the advancement of truth, freedom, knowledge, virtue, charity, holiness,—all that can elevate the human character and increase the sum of human happiness. It was no question with me, which was preferable—quietness or anxiety—satisfaction with what we are, or seriousness as to what we ought to be—forgetfulness of our actual condition, or the risk of incurring new reproaches respecting it from those who are too liable to forget the difficulties we have had to encounter. Surely the members of our societies should often have their better feelings awakened, their noblest energies called into exercise, by being reminded that they have espoused principles of the highest value—principles which affect their consciences, their religious improvement, their usefulness in this world, and their salvation in

the next—principles for the sake of which their forefathers gladly remained in the humblest stations,—nay, often submitted to fines, imprisonment, exile, and death. Especially should the younger branches of our communities be furnished with an impulse to the consistent imitation of the examples of their ancestors;—Dissent is not illegal, but it is unfashionable;—Unitarianism cannot be put down by the Civil Magistrate, but it often is by the arm of Prejudice;—a steady adherence to virtue does not subject a man to ridicule as a Puritan or a Roundhead, but it frequently prevents his elevation to a sphere of honour and usefulness;—what, therefore, can be more necessary than to inspire those on whom the future welfare of our churches must depend, with that holy firmness which would prove them to be worthy of their descent and of the cause committed to their care!

It is not necessary to shew how compatible this course of acting is with perfect charity towards those who differ from us. My readers will be ready to admit, that there is much in the proceedings of our fellow-christians of other denominations, particularly in their earnest attempts to promote a knowledge of the Gospel, which deserves our warmest admiration. The memoirs in this volume amply testify to the learning, the fortitude, the active benevolence

the comprehensive charity, and the never-failing piety, of many pastors whose faith we regard as very different from that first delivered to the saints.

It is not improbable that on some subjects, (I allude more especially to the tyranny of the High-Church party, and the sufferings of the Dissenters during the reigns of the Stuarts,) my language has been strong; but I may confidently ask the candid reader—was there not a cause? Is it possible for one who believes that all established churches are unscriptural,—that no government is authorized to assume the power of Christ and declare in its own words what the national belief shall be,—that even in the present day, hypocrisy, and worldly ambition, and unchristian jealousy, are continually promoted by the exclusive patronage of one sect and the virtual punishment of all the rest;—is it possible for one who believes all this, to write calmly of the daring spiritual usurpations of the seventeenth century? Who does not know that many members of the Church of England itself now look back upon those usurpations with indignant feelings? Who does not know that one of the clearest manifestations of the recent unparalleled progress of the human mind, is the increase among all parties of genuine Christian liberality? Mankind are rapidly discovering that in religious

matters each must judge for himself, and be judged only by his Maker, and that it is the part of duty to admire knowledge and genius, truth and virtue, wherever they may be found. The truly enlightened Christian does not rejoice in the possession of a mere sectarian literature; he bends with delight over the page of wisdom, whether in the works of Channing, or Robert Hall, or Doddridge, or Fenelon, or Jeremy Taylor. And although even among those Episcopalians and Nonconformists, Trinitarians and Unitarians, who have drank most largely of the spirit of their common Master, there are yet great diversities of opinion, they still, in their respective spheres, reverence more and more the inalienable rights of conscience, and accelerate the period when all men will stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free.

I have now to express my acknowledgments to the friends who have so kindly assisted me. My warmest thanks are due to Walter Wilson, Esq., of this city, the author of the History of the London Dissenting Churches. I am also largely indebted for the loan of some valuable papers to my relative, the Rev. W. H. Murch, Theological Tutor of the Baptist College, Stepney. I have peculiar pleasure in thus stating, that a large and valuable part of the original information in these pages was afforded

me through the kindness of two gentlemen of "orthodox" denominations. The reader will perceive how much aid I have derived from the Monthly Repository, the Christian Reformer, and the Unitarian Chronicle; to each of the respected Editors I am under many obligations. I have frequently referred to the contributions of my friends in the West of England; but I shall be pardoned for again mentioning the Rev. M. L. Yeates, as the correspondent on whose time I have most frequently trespassed. Nor must I omit to state that the requests for information which I have addressed to chapel-wardens, congregational committees, and ministers in distant parts of the kingdom, have been replied to with great advantage to the work.

If, under the Divine blessing, this attempt should appear serviceable to the cause of truth, and meet with a sufficiently favourable reception, I shall indulge the hope of employing, at some future time, the materials I have collected for histories of congregations in other parts of the kingdom.

Portland Place, Bath,
Nov. 10, 1835.

CONTENTS.

Gloucestershire.

Histories of Congregations:—Gloucester, Cheltenham, Cirencester, Marshfield, Frenchay.

Memoirs of Pastors:—Dr. Mather, Mr. Forbes, Mr. Theophilus Browne, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Parry, Mr. Crabb, Mr. Holt, Dr. Hort, Mr. Hazlitt..... Page 1—52

Wiltshire.

Histories:—Calne, Bradford, Trowbridge, Warminster.

Memoirs:—Mr. Bourn, Dr. Flexman, Mr. Twining, Mr. Daniel Jones, Mr. Gisburne, Mr. Buckler, Mr. Compton South, Mr. Andrews..... Page 52—94

Somersetshire.

Histories:—Bristol, Bath, Ashwick, Shepton Mallet, Bridgwater, Taunton, Yeovil, Ilminster, Crewkerne.

Memoirs:—Dr. Estlin, Mr. Rowe, Mr. Christopher Taylor, Dr. Coleman, Mr. Chandler, Mr. Jardine, Mr. Billingsley, Mr. Stogdon, Mr. Cumming, Mr. Matthew Towgood, Dr. Sherman, Mr. Jillard, Mr. Simon Browne, Mr. Norman, Mr. Moore, Mr. Matthew Towgood, Jun., Mr. Watson, Mr. Whinnel, Mr. Jeffries, Mr. Harrison, Dr. Toulmin, Mr. David, Dr. Amory, Mr. Bartlett, Dr. Lobb, Dr. Milner, Mr. Ward, Mr. D. Hughes, Mr. Batson, Mr. Strong, Mr. Blake, Mr. Blake, Jun. ..... Page 94—248

CONTENTS.

Dorsetshire.

Histories:—Bridport, Dorchester, Wareham, Poole.

Memoirs:—Mr. Howe, Mr. Wawne, Mr. Benn, Mr. Lamb, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Wesley ..... Page 248—298

Devonshire.

Histories:—Collumpton, Honiton, Colyton, Sidmouth, Lympstone and Gulliford, Topsham, Exeter, Crediton, Moreton-Hampstead, Tavistock, Plymouth, Devonport.

Memoirs:—Mr. Crompton, Mr. Morgan, Mr. John Davis, Mr. Maynard, Mr. Adams, Mr. Webb, Mr. J. Hughes, Mr. Anstis, Mr. Cornish, Mr. Butcher, Mr. Tapper, Mr. T. Jervis, Mr. J. Jervis, Mr. Stuckley, Mr. Atkins, Mr. Hallet, Mr. Trosse, Mr. Peirce, Mr. Micaijah Towgood, Mr. Kenrick, Mr. Bretland, Mr. Manning, Mr. Reynell (Crediton), Mr. Woolcombe, Mr. Foot, Mr. Collier, Mr. Rowland, Mr. Isaac, Mr. Sandercock, Mr. Merivale, Mr. Theophilus Edwards, Mr. G. Hughes, Mr. N. Jacob, Mr. N. Harding, Mr. H. Moore (Liskeard), Mr. Reynell (Plymouth), Dr. J. Jones, Mr. J. Jones ..... Page 298—532

Cornwall.

Histories:—Falmouth and Flushing.

Memoir:—Sir Harry Trelawny ..... Page 533—546

Appendix:—Sketches of the History of the Exeter Assembly of Ministers, and of the Western Unitarian Society 547

Index 571

Gloucestershire.

ERRATA.

Page 158, for "Pierce," read *Peirce.*
170 and 171, for "*William* Peard Jillard," read *Peard Jillard.*
194, for "till the 1797," read *till the year* 1797.
215, for "*John* Glass," read *Robert Glass.*
220, for "*Robert* Bartlett," read *Edward Bartlett.*
368, last line, for "in the neighbouring town of Totness," read *in Totness, the next town on our list.*
524, for "to which *is* subjoined," read *to which are subjoined.*

CONTENTS.

Dorsetshire.

Histories:—Bridport, Dorchester, Wareham, Poole.

Memoirs:—Mr. Howe, Mr. Wawne, Mr. Benn, Mr. Lamb, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Wesley ..... Page 248—298

Devonshire.

Histories:—Collumpton, Honiton, Colyton, Sidmouth, Lympstone and Gulliford, Topsham, Exeter, Crediton, Moreton-Hampstead, Tavistock, Plymouth, Devonport.

of Ministers, and of the Western Unitarian Society 547

INDEX 571

Gloucestershire.

GLOUCESTER.

CHELTENHAM.

CIRENCESTER.

MARSHFIELD.

FRENCHAY.

GLOUCESTER.

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COLLECTION
CAMBRIDGE

THIS respectable city is situated in the Vale of Gloucester, on a gentle eminence, rising on the east side from the river Severn. The honour of founding it is due to the Britons, who named it *Caer Gloew*, the appellation by which it is yet distinguished in Wales; and Alfred of Beverley mentions it as one of the twenty-eight cities erected by them previous to the Roman Invasion. Caer Gloew signifies the *Fortress* of GLOEW.

Henry the Eighth by letters patent, dated September the third, 1541, and afterwards confirmed by act of parliament, erected the city of Gloucester, the county of that city, and all the county of Gloucester, into a bishopric, with a dean and chapter, by the name of the diocese of Gloucester. The church appointed for the cathedral of the new see was that belonging to the Abbey, founded by Wolphere, first Christian king of Mercia, and Ethelred, his brother and successor, between the years 680 and 682. This magnificent structure combines many interesting specimens of Saxon, Norman, and English architecture; and particularly of the latter.

In the city and suburbs of Gloucester were formerly eleven parochial churches, but those only of St. Michael, St. Mary de Crypt, St. Nicholas, St. Mary de Lode, St. John's, and St. Aldate are now standing; the remainder having been either destroyed at the siege in 1643, or since taken down.—BRAYLEY and BRITTON.

Population in 1811,—8181; in 1821,—9744; in 1831,—11,933.

BARTON STREET CHAPEL.

THE city of Gloucester is distinguished in the annals of Unitarianism, as one of the first places in which its doctrines were revived. Here lived the celebrated John Bidle, and here, nearly two centuries ago, "he perceived (says his biographer) that the common doctrine concerning the Holy Trinity was not grounded in Revelation, much less in Reason."* In the year 1644, while filling the honourable office of master of the Crypt Grammar School, he was accused of heresy before the magistrates of the city,—which accusation he answered by exhibiting in writing a confession of his faith in "One Infinite and Almighty Essence, called God," and in our Saviour Jesus Christ as "truly God," in consequence of his union with him. As he professed his belief in only one person in the Godhead, many suspicions of his orthodoxy were still entertained, and eighteen months afterwards he was committed to

* See a short account of the "life of John Bidle, M.A., sometime of Magdalen Hall, Oxon.," prefixed to one of his works. This interesting memoir appears in a small quarto volume, now rarely met with, containing a few valuable treatises on the doctrines of Unitarianism, one of which was published so early as the year 1648. See, also, Toulmin's Life of Bidle. This author has not mentioned his reason for changing the orthography of the name. In the original life it is invariably Bidle.

the common prison on the charge of having denied, both in writing and conversation, the Deity of the Holy Spirit.

From this time John Bidle became more earnest in his inquiries after truth, and more fearless in his avowal of the results. He was released, however, after a confinement of six months, on giving security for his appearance before the Parliament in London. Thither he was summoned, by that body, in April, 1647; and notwithstanding their denunciations against the spiritual tyranny of the Church of England, they treated this dissenter from their own doctrines with more than episcopal rigour.* But before his departure for London, and probably during the whole of his future life, his exertions and sufferings, which were increased in importance by his great learning and unblemished character, produced a considerable effect in Gloucester. We are told† that while he was under bail for his appear-

* While the Presbyterians were in power, they were certainly not the friends of true religious liberty. It was not until they had suffered many years from the deprivation of the rights of conscience, that they contended for toleration. The treatment of Bidle fully bears out the account given by Hume, of the tendency to act upon persecuting principles in the preceding year. "Nothing was attended with more universal scandal than the propensity of many in the parliament towards a toleration of the protestant sectaries. The Presbyterians exclaimed that this indulgence made the church of Christ resemble Noah's ark, and rendered it a receptacle for all unclean beasts. They insisted that the least of Christ's truths was superior to all political considerations. They maintained the eternal obligation imposed by the covenant to extirpate heresy and schism. And they menaced all their opponents with the same rigid persecution under which they themselves had groaned, when held in subjection by the hierarchy."—HUME's History of England, Vol. vii. p. 71.

† WOOD's Athenæ Oxoniensis, Vol. ii. p. 300, and LINDSEY's Historical View of the State of the Unitarian Doctrine and Worship, p. 126.

ance before the Parliament, Archbishop Usher, who happened to be travelling through Gloucester in his way to London, "having before heard of him, spoke to and used him with all fairness and pity, as well as with strength of argument, to convince him of his dangerous error." The historian, however, adds an observation which conveys an idea of coarse ill-nature and determined prejudice rather than of "fairness and strength of argument"—"telling him (he says) that either he (Bidle) was in a damnable error, or else that the whole Church of Christ, who had in all ages worshiped the Holy Ghost, had been guilty of idolatry."

Although this noble-minded man widely diffused sentiments unfavourable to established customs and opinions, the Barton Street congregation cannot be said to owe its origin to him. It was formed, by a singular coincidence, in the year of his death, 1662, and was identified from the first with that greater and more glorious cause of Nonconformity, of whose birth he lived just long enough to hear. As he languished within the walls of his dungeon, he was gladdened by the tidings that, in every part of the kingdom, hundreds of pious and learned ministers were preparing to suffer in consequence of the Act of Uniformity! Great was his encouragement to close his troubled pilgrimage with the prayer of the aged Simeon upon his lips; for it was impossible that such a man could avoid perceiving that the principles he had advocated, "amid evil days and evil tongues," would be ulti-

mately forwarded by the events of the ever-memorable Bartholomew Day.

The cause of Nonconformity at Gloucester was founded by two ministers who originally belonged to the Church of England.* One was Dr. Increase Mather, a native of Dorchester in New England, but connected by education and relationship with this country and Ireland. He came to Gloucester, from the island of Guernsey, at the earnest solicitation of Mr. Forbes, who was a preacher at the Cathedral; and thither he returned again a short time before the Restoration. The usurpations which followed that event obliged him to go back to his native land, where he resisted successfully the measures of the infatuated Stewarts, and spent the remainder of his life in honourable ministerial labours. Short as was the time of his residence at Gloucester, he probably proved himself efficient in fostering that love of liberty, both civil and religious, which the inhabitants of the city manifested on several trying occasions during the struggles of that period. Their bold and successful resistance of the Royal army, in the year 1642, indicates that they were attached to Presbyterianism even then; there being few instances of such resistance, in which the preference of the leaders of the Parliamentary forces for this form of church government was not heartily shared by those who enlisted under their banners.

* Nonconformists' Memorial, Vol. i. p. 540, edition of 1775. To this edition all my subsequent references will be made.

The other minister was Mr. James Forbes, who was ejected from the Cathedral by the Act of Uniformity. The church to which he had preached consisted chiefly of his own converts, made during a ministry of six years. At first he laboured privately after his ejectment; but as all attempts to induce him to conform entirely failed, he was soon interrupted by harassing and expensive persecutions. On one occasion he was committed to Chepstow Castle, where he was long confined in a strait and dark room; and while pursuing his pastoral labours after his discharge, he was subject to several imprisonments. The penalty of one act on which he was indicted was imprisonment for a year; of another, the payment of twenty pounds a month; and of another, perpetual banishment from his country or death. He was at length excommunicated, and the writ *de capiendo* was out against him. At the time of the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion he retired to Enfield, but was afterwards recalled and allowed to labour once more among his own people. The present chapel in Barton Street was erected for his use, in the year 1699; he continued to preach in it until the year 1712, when he died, having been connected with the congregation fifty-eight years. His remains were interred in a vault in the chapel, at the foot of the pulpit, and under a black slab, which is concealed by the platform on which the communion table stands. On this slab is the following inscription:—

JACOBUS FORBESIUS, A.M., IN HAC CIVITATE ANNOS CIRCITER 58 FIDELIS CHRISTI MINISTER, ET TESTIS VERITATIS ET PACIS EVANGELICÆ ÆQUE STUDIOSUS. OBIIT 31 MAII, ANNO MDCCXII. ÆTATIS LXXXIII.*

Mr. Forbes had several assistants towards the latter end of his life. One was Mr. John Reynolds, who was at Gloucester from 1706 to 1708, when he removed to Shrewsbury. He was succeeded by Mr. Denham, who became the pastor on the death of Mr. Forbes, and was ordained at Gloucester in 1713. Nine years afterwards, Mr. Denham removed to London, and the congregation elected Mr. Jeremiah Tidcombe, who also removed to London, after filling the office the same length of time. Mr. Denham officiated, for some time after his removal, as minister of the Presbyterian congregation then meeting in Gravel Lane, Houndsditch;† and Mr. Tidcombe was pastor of a congregation at Radcliffe Cross, and afternoon preacher at Salters' Hall.‡ The next minister was Mr. Richard Addey, from Kingswood, Wilts., who continued with the congregation till his death, in 1739. They were then destitute twelve months, and at length chose Dr. Hodge, who was educated at Taunton under Mr. Henry Grove. Before he settled at Gloucester he was the minister of a congregation at Deal, in Kent; in 1749 he ac-

* Communicated, with other particulars, by the Rev. G. B. Brock.

† WILSON'S History of Dissenting Churches in London, Vol. I. p. 397.—My plan does not include, for obvious reasons, distinct memoirs of *all* the ministers. Of those concerning whom full particulars are not given, there will be short notices in the historical parts of the work.

‡ Wilson's Hist., Vol. ii. p. 39.

cepted an invitation to succeed Dr. Grosvenor at Crosby Square, London.* At the commencement of his ministry at Gloucester, the register of baptisms belonging to the chapel was begun; and from this source we learn that he was followed, in the year 1751, by Mr. Dickenson; the congregation having been supplied in the interval by various ministers, particularly by Mr. Evans, of Bridgenorth, and Mr. Parry, of Cirencester. Mr. Dickenson's name appears in the register until the close of the year 1784, when he became infirm, and the congregation elected as his assistant Mr. Tremlett, who removed before the death of the pastor, which occurred in 1796. The subsequent ministers have been—Mr. Aubrey, now of Swansea, who remained at Gloucester seventeen years; Mr. Browne, late of Bath, who was the minister nine years; Mr. Astley, now of Shrewsbury, who left at the end of five years; and Mr. Brock, who settled here on his finishing his course of education under the Rev. H. Acton, of Exeter. Between the retirement of Mr. Browne and the election of Mr. Astley, the chapel was closed for two years, considerable repairs being necessary, and the funds being required to accomplish them.

The numbers of the society have varied considerably at different periods. In the time of Mr.

* Dr. Hodge bequeathed his valuable library of books to the Taunton Academy. They were afterwards removed to Exeter.—Wilson's Hist. Vol. i. p. 354, where the reader may find a list of the works of Dr. Hodge, and a description of him as "a learned and respectable man, of moderate sentiments, and an excellent preacher."

Forbes and Mr. Denham they were large, there being no other Dissenting place of worship in the city. The Independent chapel was built soon after the choice of Mr. Denham, on which occasion a separation took place. Mr. John Alexander was the first minister of the new society. The worshipers in the old chapel had a considerable majority; in 1715, Mr. Denham had 400 hearers, and Mr. Alexander 250.* At the time of the division, the seceders secretly removed a valuable theological library, bequeathed by Mr. Forbes for the use of his successors at the Presbyterian chapel. Both the late and the present Independent ministers have fully recognised the right of their brethren in Barton Street to this important legacy; and an attempt has been made, though without success, to recover it, and fulfil the liberal intentions of the donor by making it of general utility.† At the same time four silver cups, bequeathed by Mr. Forbes for the use of the chapel, in the administration of the Lord's Supper, were carried off also; these were in use until lately at the Independent chapel; an application was made for their restoration, but no reply was given. The minister's house, which forms the eastern boundary of the place of worship in Barton Street, did not happen to be moveable, and therefore

* Mr. Wilson's MSS.

† After providing especially for the use of the books by his successors at Barton Street, Mr. Forbes empowered the Trustees "to lend one book at a time to any of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers living in the county of Gloucester, or to any of the Protestant Dissenting congregation in the city of Gloucester."

remained in the possession of the original congregation. This building has an antique appearance, and was probably built soon after the chapel. There is a small endowment, the trust-deed of which, as well as of the chapel, is drawn in the most liberal terms. No creed is imposed upon the parties assembling in this house of prayer; they are merely required to be "his Majesty's Protestant subjects dissenting from the Church of England." The cause of the secession does not appear. Mr. Denham was probably more liberal than the seceders wished him to be. Dr. Hodge was an Arian; of the opinions of his predecessors we have no information; after his death the congregation gradually became Unitarian.

I have stated that the chapel was built in 1699. Like many others of that period, it is situated several yards from the street. With the exception of a part of the roof it is concealed by a brick wall, in which is the outer entrance gate, and which is parallel with the houses of the street. The exterior of the building is very plain and presents no prepossessing appearance, having a vestry standing on one side in front, and projecting forward like a solitary wing. It is in contemplation to erect another vestry or school-room to correspond with it; and afterwards to throw down the outer wall, place palisades in its stead, and thus render the chapel more conspicuous. The interior possesses an air of antiquity; galleries occupy three sides, and the pulpit, crowned with a massive sounding board,

stands against the fourth. At the foot of the pulpit is a reading desk, and below this a handsome communion table with a marble slab. In the gallery, opposite the entrance, is a small organ. The devotional services are aided by the Reformed Liturgy, and a selection of hymns printed for the congregation, under the superintendance of Mr. Astley. In the winter months lectures are delivered, which are well attended, and have been the means of exciting a spirit of inquiry in Gloucester and the neighbourhood. The congregation now consists of about a hundred persons, among whom are the descendants of some of the most ancient families in the city,—the original supporters of Protestant dissent and the firm friends of religious truth. At the back of the chapel is a small burial-ground. The resting places of many are indicated by gravestones and raised tombs, with suitable inscriptions.

Ministers.

James Forbes, M.A.	1662—1712.
John Reynolds	1706—1708.
John Denham	1709—1722.
Jeremiah Tidcombe	1722—1731.
Richard Addey	1731—1739.
John Hodge, D.D.	1740—1749.
John Dickenson	1751—1796.
John Tremlett	1784—1795.
Richard Aubrey	1797—1814.
Theophilus Browne, M.A.	1815—1824.
Richard Astley	1826—1831.
George Browne Brock	1831.

INCREASE MATHER, D. D.—DR. MATHER'S connexion with Gloucester requires the insertion of a few particulars of his useful and eventful life.

He was the youngest son of Richard Mather, who went to New England in 1635, when he could no longer exercise his ministry conscientiously in his native country. Increase was placed, for his academical education, first at Harvard College, and afterwards at Trinity College, Dublin, in which city his eldest brother was a minister. His first settlement was at Great Torrington, in Devonshire, the parish of the learned and excellent John Howe: here he was near another brother, Nathaniel Mather, then minister at Barnstaple. On Mr. Howe's return to Torrington in 1659, after Richard Cromwell quitted the Protectorship, the subject of this memoir accepted an invitation from Colonel Bingham, Governor of Guernsey, to preach in that island. He remained there some time before he removed to Gloucester, and there he was again stationed several years afterwards, when General Monk carried round a paper to be signed, declaring that "the times then were and would be happy." This paper Mather would not sign; and on the appointment of another governor, finding it necessary to conform or lose his place, he came to England, to be exposed to fresh temptations, and to resist them with equal steadiness. Here, though he was offered a living of some hundreds a year, if he would forsake his principles, he chose rather to trust to God's providence; he therefore sailed for New England to join his aged father, and was soon settled in the New Church, in the north part of Boston.*

Mr. Mather often distinguished himself in America as a warm friend of Liberty. In 1683, Charles the Second required from the inhabitants of New England, a full submission of their charter to his pleasure. On this the freemen of Boston met; the pastor of the New Church was present; he publicly declared against their having "a hand in their own ruin," and persuaded

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 540.

them rather to leave themselves in the hands of God, and submit to his pleasure in a faithful discharge of their duty. The question was carried in the negative, unanimously; and this decision had considerable influence on the country at large. When James the Second published his declaration for liberty of conscience, Mather was sent to England with addresses of thanks to him from several congregations. Remaining in this country until after the revolution, he was of great use in obtaining the appointment of a suitable governor, and the grant of a new charter with additional privileges for his fellow-citizens. Soon after his return there was a meeting of the general assembly of the province, and the speaker of the house of representatives publicly returned him thanks, for his faithful and indefatigable services.

He now returned to the care of his church, and of the college of which he was president. About this time he was created Doctor in Divinity. In 1701 he resigned his office in the college, because the general assembly required the president to reside at Cambridge. He continued preaching to his beloved people at Boston, and reached the age of eighty before his intellectual faculties appeared to lose their vigour. He died in 1723, in the arms of his eldest son, and was honoured by his church with a greater funeral than had ever been seen in those parts. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Foxcroft; and the ministers of Boston condoled with his church, in his own pulpit, for nine or ten weeks successively.

The Nonconformists' Memorial has a list of eighty-five works, chiefly pamphlets, published by this celebrated man. Besides the usual subjects of a minister's publications, we find discourses on Comets—Earthquakes—The Stormy Winds—The Troubles of New England—and "Whether a man may marry two sisters." The names of his descendants are well known to all who feel an interest in the religion of the New World as those of men who have filled prominent and useful offices in her colleges and churches.

JAMES FORBES, M.A.—This gentleman was a member of an honourable Scotch family. After taking his degree of Master of Arts at Edinburgh, he spent some time at Oxford. Full of piety, he was earnestly desirous that God would choose for him a useful station, and bless his ministry to the conversion of souls. Not being satisfied with a parish which was offered to him, he was sent to the cathedral at Gloucester, where he laboured with great success, and with so much zeal that he was in danger of shortening his life. After his ejectment, and while he continued to minister privately among his people, Dr. Frampton, first Dean and afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, made overtures to him to conform. The powers that were, finding temptations ineffectual, resorted to the persecutions mentioned in the account of the congregation. These also failed to subdue his attachment to liberty. He steadily persevered in his determination to maintain a conscience void of offence. During the latter part of his life, after the establishment of Toleration, Mr. Forbes lived in peace and comfort at Gloucester, chiefly on his own property. He was a pious, benevolent, and learned man; deeply wounded at the last by some decays among ministers and other professors; and anxious that the rising generation of ministers should adorn their doctrine by a holy conversation. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Isaac Noble, of Bristol.

He published a few works on subjects relating to his pulpit and pastoral duties.*

The Rev. THEOPHILUS BROWNE, M.A., was born in the city of Derby. At the usual age he entered as a student in Christ Church College, Cambridge. Here he was distinguished for talent, application and extensive attainments. After taking the degrees of Bachelor and Master of Arts, he was admitted Fellow of Peterhouse, July 15th, 1785. This appointment

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 546.

he continued to hold until December 1793, when he had a presentation to the vicarage of Hinton, in the county of Cambridge. While performing the quiet duties of a parish priest, he found time for a more careful and diligent study of the Scriptures than he had previously been able to engage in. Intimately acquainted with the original languages, well skilled in the art of criticism, and ardently devoted to the pursuit of truth, he soon saw reason to believe that the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, and other doctrines of the Church of England were unscriptural. As soon as his conversion to Unitarian Christianity was settled, he perceived that there was but one course for him to pursue; he resolved to give up his preferment, relinquish his connexion with the Establishment, and unite himself with a body of Christians in whose service he could enjoy perfect freedom. Yet to carry this resolution into effect probably cost him a severe struggle; his lot in life was linked with that of a lady who was or had been, like himself, a conscientious member of the Church; and a man of his abilities and acquirements might have fairly calculated on attaining a higher rank in the Establishment than that of vicar of a country parish.

Nothing, however, led Mr. Browne to waver in his righteous determination. The circumstance being known, about the latter end of the year 1800 he received an invitation from the Unitarian society at Warminster. This he accepted, and continued to officiate as their minister seven years. He then went to York to fill the office of classical tutor at the Manchester College. His next situation was in the Octagon Chapel, Norwich, where he remained about two years. He afterwards officiated successively at Congleton, Chester and Gloucester; at the two former places his ministrations were short; at the latter he remained eight years from 1815 to 1823. From this time Mr. Browne resided in Bath as a private individual, only preaching when his services were sought for by ministers in the neighbourhood. But the close of his life was far from being marked by inactivity; his means of usefulness,

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY CAMBRIDGE

which he retained to the last, he diligently employed; he was particularly attentive to the poor, and earnestly desirous of relieving both their temporal and spiritual wants. At the time of his death he was president of the Bath Mechanics' Institution, in which society he had been an occasional lecturer, and in connexion with which he formed several classes of young persons, to whom he communicated biblical as well as general knowledge.

Mr. Browne was the author of "Selections from the Old and New Testament," and a Sermon on the Necessity of an Improved Version of the Scriptures. He compiled a Liturgy and edited "Russell's Devotional Addresses"; "a Volume of Posthumous Sermons by Dr. Toulmin," and "Select parts of Melmoth's Great Concern of a Religious Life."

His last illness was of short duration; he preached at the Bath Unitarian chapel, in the absence of the pastor, about a fortnight before his death, which occurred May 20, 1835, in the 72nd year of his age. His remains were interred at Lyncomb, near Bath, in the same vault with those of his wife, carried thither but a few months previously.*

* Christian Reformer, N.S., Vol. ii. p. 508.

CHELTENHAM.

THIS fashionable town is supposed to have derived its name from the river Chilt, which flows past it on the south side.

The Spring, or Spa as it is called by way of distinction, was first noticed to possess medicinal properties in the year 1716.

Since that time the buildings have progressively improved, both in appearance and number. The first Master of the Ceremonies in this place was appointed in 1780.

The situation of Cheltenham is extremely pleasant; on the south and west it is open to the vale, but on the north-east it is sheltered by the immense amphitheatre formed by the Cotswold Hills.

Population in 1811,—8325; in 1821,—13,396; in 1831,—22,942.

ALBION STREET CHAPEL.

The origin of this congregation is recent;—it has, however, assumed a permanent appearance, which requires a short account of it to be given in this work.

A few years since, Mr. Furber, an intelligent tradesman, of the Unitarian denomination, removed from Bath to Cheltenham. Deeply feeling the want of the advantages he had been accustomed to enjoy, as a member of a congregation of worshipers of one God the Father, he resolved to do what he could to supply the deficiency.

His first attempt was made in the month of August 1832. Mr. and Mrs. Furber, their eldest son, and two other persons then assembled in an upper room to commence public worship on Unitarian principles. They had, for some time, only a morning service, but as their proceedings became known their number increased, and they were soon encouraged to occupy a much larger room on the ground floor and to conduct two services.

The duty of officiating devolved on Mr. Furber. He regularly read to the little flock such discourses as were most suitable to their circumstances. In

order to strengthen their own faith and inform the minds of candid inquirers, he frequently selected the sermons of Dr. Priestley, Dr. Channing, Mr. Belsham, Mr. Aspland, Mr. Fox, and other eminent ministers. Again the hearers increased; several highly intelligent individuals, permanently residing in Cheltenham, became members of the society; and a few influential visitors occasionally came and worshiped, and made useful presents of money and books.

In the autumn of the year 1834, they were joined by a gentleman who had previously resided in Wales, and there rendered valuable literary aid to the cause of Unitarianism. They then deemed it advisable to engage, if possible, some large public room, and at length succeeded in securing for their use on the Lord's day, a room in Albion Street, occupied in the week by the members of the Mechanics' Institution. This is a [illegible] the situation is central and the entrance good; there is an air of neatness and cheerfulness in the room which renders it unusually attractive. It was opened on Sunday March 22nd, 1835, by the Rev. G. B. Brook, of Gloucester.* Mr. Fustier still officiates, and still has the pleasure of seeing himself rewarded for the efforts and sacrifices he has made by an increasing attendance. That he has made *sacrifices* will be easily believed when it is remembered that he is a tradesman, and that there are few places in which the advocacy of what are called

* Christian Reformer, N.S. Vol. II. p. 256.

Evangelical sentiments and the opposition to the progress of Unitarianism are more strenuous than at Cheltenham.

The present number of worshipers (August, 1835) is, on the average, about fifty. One pleasing promise of stability and earnestness is the formation of a Sunday-school. Several Unitarian ministers of the district have occasionally assisted Mr. Furbur, and a plan has been proposed for rendering him their aid more frequently. It has been suggested that six or eight ministers might undertake to preach at Cheltenham, two Sundays each, during the season, and, by inviting the attention of the public on one part of the day to their views of divine truth, excite yet greater interest in the welfare of the congregation. In reply to this suggestion, Mr. Furber wrote to the friend who offered it, "your plan for affording us a certain supply of efficient ministers is highly desirable, and from the promises which have been made to us, as well as the past liberality of the supporters of what we deem Gospel truth in this place, I have no doubt we should succeed in providing the necessary funds for defraying the expenses."

Should this plan be acted upon it will probably prepare the way for the erection of a chapel, and the settlement of a stated minister.

CIRENCESTER.

"CIRENCESTER is distant thirty-six miles eastward from Bristol, and thirty-three from Bath; thirty-four westward from Oxford, and seventeen south-east from Gloucester."

"It stands on the river *Cori*, or *Cari*, or *Corin*, which we now call the *Churn*, and takes its name from that river."

"There is a great deal of travelling through Cirencester from the northern to the western parts of England, and from Bath and Bristol to London, through Oxford and Abingdon."

"This is called an ancient city, and, according to the opinion of some persons, of so high antiquity as to have been built by the Britons before the Roman invasion."

"The beautiful Roman pavements, the square stones with PONT. MAX., and other inscriptions upon them, the Roman coins, rings, and intaglios which have been found here in such abundance, all bear testimony to the ancient grandeur of this place."

"There have been three parish churches in Cirencester; one dedicated to St. Cecilia, which was entirely down in Leland's time; the church of St. Lawrence is still standing, but now converted into small tenements. The third is the present parish church, dedicated to St. John the Evangelist. It is a large and beautiful building, consisting of the nave, two large aisles, and five chapels."—RUDDER.

Population in 1811,—4540; in 1821,—4987; 1831,—5420.

OLD DISSENTING CHAPEL.

This congregation was formed by Mr. Alexander Gregory, who was ejected from the living of Cirencester by the Act of Uniformity. He had a deep sense of the practical value of the principles for which he suffered; and, deeming it right to obey God rather than man, he continued preaching to his adherents after his ejectment. But at length the Five-Mile act drove him away; and the people to whom he had ministered, were left to maintain their consistency without the aid of a pastor.

It was not long, however, before they were again gathered together under a minister of their choice. There are traces of the existence of a Dissenting place of worship, with a stated ministry, at the earliest period allowed by law. Tradition informs us that the Presbyterians were in possession of a house of prayer in 1688, when most of the inhabitants of the town were partizans of the Stuarts. We are further told, that, during a conflict which took place here, at this period, several persons with drawn swords were stationed near the meeting-house to prevent its demolition, and that two of the swords

are now in possession of a member of the society.* It is certain that the Dissenters at Cirencester were exposed to considerable danger at the time of the Revolution. By the influence of the Duke of Beaufort a vehement opposition was got up against the Prince of Orange; Lord Lovelace, then on his way to join the Prince, was attacked by a party of the county militia, made prisoner, and carried to Gloucester goal; blood was also shed, the captain of the troop and his son being killed on the spot.

The successor of Mr. Gregory in the pastoral office was Mr. Beeby. All that I can learn concerning him is, that he spent here the few last years of his life. The next minister was Mr. Stephen Worth, the son of a minister who was ejected from Kilsby, in Northamptonshire.† Mr. Worth was settled at Cirencester at the time of his father's death, which probably occurred at the close of the seventeenth century. He was succeeded by Mr. Keeling, who removed hither from Salisbury. In his time the congregation amounted to six hundred. He died in 1724.‡ The congregation then elected Mr. Skinner Smith, who, after remaining three years, removed to Abingdon, and was followed at Cirencester by Mr. John Evans. To the latter, the society is indebted for the first regular entry of baptisms, which he commenced in 1730. There is one entry, as early as the year 1727, made by Mr. Tidcombe, who probably visited the congregation

* Communicated by a native of Cirencester.

† Noncon. Mem., Vol. ii. p. 230. ‡ Mr. Wilson' MSS.

from Gloucester, during the interval of Mr. Keeling's removal and Mr. Smith's election.

From this register we are enabled to infer the dates of the election and removal of the other ministers, with tolerable accuracy.* Mr. Evans, concerning whom I have not been able to obtain any further information, remained here till 1742, when he died, and was succeeded by Mr. Parry. Of this gentleman and his successor, Mr. Crabb, short memoirs will be given. During their ministry, and particularly that of Mr. Parry, the congregation was numerous; and among its members were several influential persons. On the removal of Mr. Crabb they were ministered to for a short time by Mr. Cogan, well known as the conductor for many years of a large classical school at Walthamstow, and the minister of the Presbyterian congregation in that place. Mr. Cogan removed in 1789. The next minister was Mr. Kings, who resigned the pastoral office about the year 1803, and died in 1809, after a long and painful illness. He was interred in the burial-ground; the inscription over his grave is highly honourable to his memory. Mr. Kings was succeeded by Mr. Fry, who removed to Kidderminster in 1807, and still lives there; Mr. Holt, the particulars of whose life will appear among our biographical notices; Mr. Read and Mr. Dixon, who each remained only one year; and, lastly, Mr. F. Horsfield, who was chosen in 1820.

* I have here to acknowledge the kindness of Mr. William Search, of Cirencester.

The present number of worshipers, though smaller than it was many years since, is not discouraging. I have no means of ascertaining how long Unitarian sentiments have been entertained by this society. All the ministers of whose writings or opinions we have any knowledge were Antitrinitarians. The chapel is an ancient structure, large and commodious. The earliest date in the burial-ground is 1750. Among the monumental inscriptions of interest are those on the tombs of John Smith, Esq., formerly of Aylesbury, Bucks., and Thomas Smith, Esq., of Easton Grey, Wilts., both Justices of the Peace. The inscription on Mr. Kings' gravestone is as follows:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF THE REV. JOHN KINGS,
FOR MANY YEARS A RESPECTED MINISTER
OF THIS CONGREGATION;
HE HELD A DISTINGUISHED RANK AMONG HIS BRETHREN
FOR HIS EXTENSIVE LEARNING AND EXCELLENT UNDERSTANDING.
HE WAS POSSESSED OF AN ACCURATE JUDGMENT, THE PUREST
PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRITY, A HEART WARMED BY GENUINE PIETY,
THE MOST CONCILIATORY AND AMIABLE MANNERS.
AFTER A LONG AND PAINFUL ILLNESS HE DIED, MOST BELOVED
AND LAMENTED BY THOSE WHO KNEW HIM BEST,
ON FEBRUARY 4, 1809,
IN THE 51st YEAR OF HIS AGE.

On the opposite side of the stone is the following:

ALSO IN MEMORY OF
HANNAH, THE WIFE AND RELICT OF THE REV. JOHN KINGS;
WHO DIED THE 25th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1820,
IN AN HUMBLE HOPE OF A JOYFUL RESURRECTION AT THE
LAST DAY.

Ministers.

Alexander Gregory	1662—1665.
—— Beeby	
Stephen Worth	
John Keeling	—1726.
Skinner Smith	1727—1730.
John Evans	1730—1742.
Joshua Parry	1742—1776.
Habakkuk Crabb.....	1776—1787.
Eliezer Cogan	1788—1789.
John Kings.....	1790—1803.
Richard Fry	1803—1807.
James Holt	1808—1817.
John Read	1817—1818.
Anthony Dixon	1819—1820.
Frederick Horsfield.....	1820.

The Rev. Alexander Gregory was one of those ministers called the Country Triers. When the king's army besieged Cirencester, a cannon-ball fell upon the house where he lived, while he was at prayer. The house was much injured, but he was wonderfully preserved. When the town could hold out no longer, he, in company with a friend, tried to make an escape. One of the king's soldiers pursued them, and quickly killed his companion; but though the soldier ran at him several times he avoided him, and received no harm. He was forced from his people, when the town was taken by the king's army, and when the war was at an end, settled at another place at some distance. On the earnest solicitation of his old friends at Cirencester, he returned to them, and continued till the coming out of the Act of Uniformity, though his benefice there was of considerably less value than the other. He was much solicited to con-

form, by a person at that time in power, who signified to him that his so doing would be very acceptable to his majesty, who was inclined to prefer him, and would resent his non-compliance. But Mr. Gregory could not satisfy his conscience, and drew up a paper, containing the reasons of his nonconformity, which he sent to the person who solicited him. In his last sermon in public he told his flock, that though he should be deprived of his benefice, which was all that he and his family had to subsist on, he would yet continue to minister to them as long as the government would suffer him. But at last the Five-Mile act forced him away, and he removed to Minchin-hampton, where he finished his course not long after. On taking leave of his friends, he told some with whom he was most intimate that he should see their faces no more; and it happened accordingly. He was a very humble, serious, and affectionate preacher. His unwearied labours had great success. He kept up a weekly lecture every Tuesday; and on Thursdays in the afternoon he catechized in his own house, taking great care not to discourage such as were bashful or had bad memories; for whom he was so much concerned, that he would often follow them to their own houses, even the meanest in his parish, to give them private instruction in a plain and familiar way.*

The Rev. JOSHUA PARRY.—Scanty as my materials are, I cannot refrain from giving a distinct memoir of Mr. Parry. He was so highly esteemed for his talents and character, and so long connected with the congregation at Cirencester, that even a short account of him will be acceptable to my readers. I have not been able to find his name among the various lists of students in Dissenting academies, nor can I ascertain whether he was settled as minister in any place prior to his invitation to Cirencester. Here he remained thirty-four years. The last entry of baptisms made by him was in the year 1776; and in the same year his remains were deposited in the burial-ground

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 532.

belonging to the congregation of which he had been the faithful and beloved minister. There is neither a tomb nor an inscription, but the spot is indicated by a plain rough stone, which is well known to be the protector of "Mr. Parry's grave." He himself, however, left a lasting memorial of his liberal sentiments and his usefulness as a preacher, in seventeen sermons which were published after his death. They are described in the Monthly Review for 1783* as "very sensible and animated sermons, breathing a warm and affectionate spirit of rational piety and Christian benevolence." "Their original aim (says the author of the preface) was principally to impress the heart, in a warm and forcible manner, with truths of acknowledged practical importance," * * * "and it is sincerely hoped that they will not be perused in vain, although they must necessarily lose much of their energy, from being unaccompanied by that nervous oratory with which they were originally pronounced."

Mr. Parry's society was highly valued by many who did not belong to his communion; he was honoured, more particularly, for many years, with the friendship of Earl Bathurst, of Oakley Park, near Cirencester. He left two sons, one of whom Dr. C. H. Parry, was well known as an eminent physician at Bath, and long connected with the Presbyterian congregation in that city; also a daughter, married to Sir Benjamin Hobhouse, Bart., both members for many years of the same society. Dr. Parry was named after Caleb Hillier, Esq., a zealous and liberal benefactor to the Dissenting interest at Cirencester. The present Sir Edward Parry, the arctic navigator, and Dr. Charles Parry, of Bath, are grandsons of the subject of this memoir.

The Rev. HABAKKUK CRABB was born at Wattisfield, in Suffolk, in the year 1750. Eminently pious and respectable was the character of his parents. His father was bred to no business, and lived on his paternal fortune till he had seven

* Vol. lxix. p. 444.

children, with the prospect of a still increasing family. Then, judging it his duty to provide, by some other means, for his numerous offspring, he farmed one of his own estates, and made malt for the London market. The family subsequently increased to fifteen, of whom the subject of this memoir was the youngest but one. He received his grammar learning under Mr. Walker, then minister of Framlingham, and was removed in 1766 to Daventry, where he pursued, under Dr. Ashworth, a complete course of studies for the Christian ministry. In such a seminary, and under such an instructor, a man of Mr. Crabb's disposition and habits could not fail to make considerable improvement. So jealous was he of the least abuse of time, or irregularity of disposition, while he was a student, that he kept a memorandum-book, in which he noted down how each hour of the day was spent, and what effect either company, prayers, or sermons had on his temper. Indeed, he carried his diligence to excess. Having read with great delight the Life of Dr. Doddridge, he was ambitious of imitating that divine in his application to study; not considering that a degree of exertion which in one case may be safe, shall in another prove pernicious. For months together, Mr. Crabb rose at four in the morning, and, without ever going abroad for exercise, pursued his studies till midnight. This brought on such nervous disorders, and so entirely shook the fabric of his constitution, that he not only became very ill for a season, but was more or less an invalid to the end of life.*

In 1771, Mr. Crabb, having finished the usual course at Daventry, was invited to settle at Stowmarket. This invitation he afterwards accepted; when it was first offered he could not embrace it, being under a prior engagement to accompany his friend and fellow-student, Thomas Fuller, Esq., on his travels into Scotland. That gentleman honoured Mr. Crabb with par-

* See a memoir prefixed to a volume of Mr. Crabb's sermons, by the Rev. Hugh Worthington, Jun., for the benefit of the family of Mr. Crabb. The unusually long list of subscribers, not only for copies of the work but to sums of a considerable amount, is an honourable testimony to the worth both of Mr. Crabb and his friends.

ticular marks of favour to the day of his death, and continued his generosity to one of his children. After fulfilling the pastoral charge at Stowmarket four years, various circumstances induced him to remove to Cirencester. When he had been there two years, he married Miss Norman, a member of his former congregation. As the cares of a family soon devolved upon him, he was persuaded to undertake the board and education of two young gentlemen of considerable fortune; but, what is no uncommon case, by this step he rather lessened than augmented his income. In 1787, with a view of better providing for his children, Mr. Crabb accepted the proposal of his brother-in-law, Mr. Fenner, to assist him in his school and pulpit at Devizes. But his residence there was also short; in January 1789 he had a call from Wattisfield, the place of his nativity, which had recently become vacant by the death of the venerable Mr. Harmer. Here Mr. Crabb's expectations were again disappointed. Though he was highly esteemed by many members of the society, yet, to others, he could not give satisfaction because he preferred scriptural language to human phrases, on points peculiar to revelation. He therefore prudently retired, and found among a serious, enlightened, and affectionate congregation at Royston, an asylum adapted to his wishes, where he continued till his death. He first preached as a probationer among them, July 4th, 1790. But in little more than four years the end of his labours approached. He died on the 25th of December 1794.

During his short illness, as long as the state of his intellects admitted, he discovered a mind imbued with piety, gratitude and resignation. He left behind him seven orphans—the youngest but two years of age; at the birth of this child he lost his beloved wife. The bereavement of such a partner, and concern for his motherless children, weighed heavily on his spirits, and accelerated his end. As a Christian, Mr. Crabb remarkably verified the description of true religion by the Apostle James,—"The wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good

fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." As a pastor, he equally respected all the conditions of his flock; though his manners and tastes fitted him for the genteelest circles, yet he never neglected the poor and afflicted; youth and age, prosperity and adversity, regularly shared his visits and services. As a preacher, without pretending to eloquence, he universally gained the attention of his hearers; his prayers and discourses had a perspicuous neatness, as remote from vulgarity on the one hand as from artificial labour on the other.

In the churchyard at Royston, on a gravestone erected to his memory by the congregation, are inscribed the following lines:

"HUSH'D IS THE STORM OF LIFE'S TEMPESTUOUS DAY,
THY HEART NO MORE BY MORTAL ANGUISH TORN,
SERENE REPOSES WITH ITS KINDRED CLAY,
TILL, WAK'D FROM DEATH, THOU HAIL'ST THE ETERNAL MORN."

The Rev. JAMES HOLT was born at Stepney, in the year 1756. His parents were in humble life, but he had a notion that he was of the same family as Lord Chief Justice Holt. In 1773, he was apprenticed to an engraver, and made such proficiency, that he earned six guineas per week before the expiration of his apprenticeship. Part of his earnings being his own, he found himself, at this period, in the possession of sixty guineas. He had been brought up in the Church of England, but was now converted to Calvinistic Methodism. Yet though he attended the various popular preachers of this class, he afterwards became more sober in his views, and united himself with the Independent Church in Hare Court, Aldersgate Street. By the advice of his pastor, his attention was turned towards the ministry, and under his patronage he entered, in 1780, the Academy at Homerton, with the savings of his industry in his pocket. He continued here seven years under the tuition of Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Daniel Fisher, Dr. Henry Mayo, and Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Benjamin Davies. On leaving the Academy, which he did with very satisfactory testimonials, he preached

for a short time at Bere, in Dorsetshire. He was then for a few months at Bury Street, St. Mary Axe, London, where Dr. Savage, and before him Dr. Watts, had been minister. In 1789, he was at Weymouth, as an assistant to Mr. Wilkins; and after short intervals we find him at Martock, in Somersetshire; Creaton, in Northamptonshire; and Daventry. His perceptible change of opinions might be one cause of these frequent removals. After leaving Daventry he sojourned with Presbyterian congregations at Plymouth Dock and Dartmouth. At Dartmouth he continued five years on a salary of thirty-five pounds per annum, out of which, so economical were his habits, he contrived to save something. About the year 1799, he removed to take charge of the congregation at Crediton, where also he remained five years. Within this period he married Miss Burton, of Dartmouth, who, dying suddenly, in 1806, left him property equal to his wants for the remainder of his life. After this event he resided for some time near London, but was soon induced to accept the pastorship of the congregation at Cirencester. In this, his last ministerial connexion, he continued ten years; at the expiration of which he retired on account of his infirmities to Hackney, where he closed his life Jan. 30th, 1828, aged 72. He desired it to be recorded on his tombstone, in the Gravel-Pit burial-ground, Hackney, that

"AFTER TEN YEARS' EARNEST, INCESSANT INQUIRY, HE BECAME A DECIDED UNITARIAN, AND CONTINUED SO INVARIABLY UNTIL DEATH."

Under these words are the following:—

"HIS EXECUTORS CONSIDER IT DUE TO HIS PIOUSLY-CHARITABLE MIND TO RECORD ALSO, THAT HE HAS BEQUEATHED THE RESIDUE OF A MODERATE ESTATE FOR THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS FOR THE UNITARIAN MINISTRY."*

* Christ. Ref., O. S., Vol. xiv. p. 125.

MARSHFIELD.

"This parish constitutes the upper division of the hundred of Thornbury. It lies seven miles north-eastward from Bath, seven south-eastward from Chipping-Sodbury, twelve and a half east from Bristol, thirty-five south from Gloucester, and one hundred and three west from London. It is situated on high ground, with a fine healthy air, and bounded on the south by a brook which divides it from Somersetshire.

"The town of Marshfield stands near the middle of the parish, and consists chiefly of one street, near a mile long, through which a turnpike road leads from London to Bristol. The business of making malt to supply the cities of Bath and Bristol was formerly very great here for which the town is conveniently situated in a corn country; and though it has been for some time declining, yet it is still pretty considerable."—Rudder.

OLD MEETING HOUSE.

About the year 1680, Mr. George Seal, who had been ejected from a parish in South Wales, and who had also been a schoolmaster at Cardiff, became pastor of a congregation at Marshfield.* In 1699 the society is said to have been denominated Independent, and to have received a certificate, by that name, permitting them to worship God in the house of Charles Rudder.† The trust-deeds of later dates describe the congregation as Independent or Presbyterian; the great object, for many years, being to keep up a distinction between Conformists and Nonconformists, rather than between two classes of Dissenters.

Mr. Seal's ministry was long and successful. He was at Marshfield in 1715, with three hundred hearers.‡ Whether Mr. Rudder's house, converted into a place of worship, was that in which they continued to meet, or whether they erected another, does not appear. The society was sufficiently numerous to have two ministers during the early part of the last century; the names of Paterson, Load,

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. ii. p. 682. † Mr. Wilson's MSS.
‡ Manchester Socinian Controversy, p. 130.

and Hort, are found in connexion with Mr. Seal's. Mr. Hort conformed and became Archbishop of Tuam. We have also the name of Angel Shapland, who died at Marshfield, in 1748, aged 57; a stone was raised to his memory in the parish churchyard.

The next minister was Mr. Evan Thomas, whose sentiments appear to have been heterodox.* During his ministry, the present meeting-house was built by subscription; but not on the site of the old one. The following is the inscription on the foundation stone.†

MARSHFIELD, OCTOBER 16, 1752.
MAY THE BLESSING OF GOD
AND HIS EVERLASTING PROTECTION
DESCEND AND REST ON THIS FOUNDATION STONE!
AND MAY IT HEREIN SHARE BUT THE COMMON FATE
OF THE WHOLE SUPERSTRUCTURE,
DESIGNED TO BE RAISED THEREON!
A SUPERSTRUCTURE INTENDED,
NOT FOR SCHISMATICAL OR HERETICAL SEPARATION,
NOT AS A SOURCE OF BIGOTRY AND SUPERSTITION,
BUT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRINCIPLES
QUITE THE REVERSE:
A SUPERSTRUCTURE
BUILT FOR THE UPHOLDING OF NO UNCHRISTIAN FACTION,
IN OPPOSITION TO NO CHRISTIAN COMMAND,
IN DEFIANCE OF NO PROTESTANT ROYAL AUTHORITY,
BUT FOR PROMOTING PURE RELIGION,
THE GLORY OF GOD,
AND THE HAPPINESS OF MANKIND;
AND ALSO,
AS A WORTHY EFFECT

* English Presbyterian, p. 51.
† Christian Reformer, O. S., Vol. xiii. p. 172.

OF THAT GLORIOUS NATIONAL CONSTITUTION
BY WHICH WE ENJOY
OUR CHRISTIAN FREEDOM AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.
FOR THESE, AND ONLY FOR THESE
SUBSTANTIAL REASONS,
REST HERE!
O AUSPICIOUS STONE!
FIRM AS THE ROCK FROM WHENCE THOU WAST TAKEN,
TILL TIME SHALL BE NO MORE!

BUILT IN THE REIGN OF OUR
GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN
GEORGE II.,
AND IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD,
1752.

W. OLAND.

The spirit of this inscription indicates that this place of worship was erected by persons whose sentiments were those of the Unitarians, rather than the Trinitarians, of the present day. However anxious the latter are for the promotion of Civil and Religious Liberty, they are more anxious to diffuse what they deem the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. If the founders of this "superstructure" had been of the same way of thinking as the modern Independents, they would undoubtedly have preferred recording their devotion, not merely to pure religion, the glory of God, and the happiness of mankind, but to the doctrines of the Fall, the Atonement, and the Trinity. I say thus much, as the right of the present possessors of the chapel at Marshfield has been often publicly questioned on

the supposition that the design of its founders was widely different from that of the present possessors.* All the successors of Mr. Thomas have been Unitarians; some may have believed in the pre-existence of Christ, but certainly none paid their adorations to the Trinity. These are historical facts; and they ought to have all the weight to which they are entitled.

Towards the close of the last century the congregation declined. At the death of Mr. David Evans, in 1817, it was greatly reduced. Since that period no minister has remained longer than three or four years. The next minister was Mr. John Evans of Bristol, author of "The Ponderer," "A History of Bristol," and other works. He united the duties of a schoolmaster with those of a minister; but was, I believe, engaged at no other place than Marshfield in the latter capacity. Mr. John Evans was succeeded by Mr. G. P. Hinton, from Crediton, who afterwards devoted himself to the legal profession, of which he is now a member, at Bristol.† The society was greatly revived in 1825, soon after the formation of a Unitarian Missionary Association for Somersetshire, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire. One of the first objects of the committee was to provide regular religious services at Marshfield, and accordingly Mr. Henry Hawkes, a Glasgow student, was engaged to supply during his recess.‡ He was

* See a paper in the Evangelical Magazine, Vol. xli. p. 447.

† Much of the information in this sketch was furnished by Mr. Hinton.

‡ C. R., O. S., Vol. xii. p. 33.

succeeded by Mr. Samuel Martin, who had been labouring with much zeal and success in the counties of Devon and Cornwall. The efforts of these ministers, under the Divine blessing, restored the congregation to health and vigour; its numbers were much greater than they had been for many years, and several useful institutions were formed with encouraging prospects. But Mr. Martin was called to a larger sphere; the congregation again became destitute of a settled minister, and, though zealous laymen supplied them for several years, the flock wandered to other folds, one by one, until very few remained. The present minister is Mr. Thomas Adams; he is obliged to live at Bristol, but preaches at Marshfield every Lord's-day; his attempts to revive the society have been in some degree successful.

Connected with the chapel is an interesting burial ground; the following inscriptions are found on monuments in the interior of the building.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF THE
REV. EVAN THOMAS,
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS PLACE;
WHO BOTH IN PREACHING AND PRACTICE
WAS A STEADY FRIEND
AND REAL ORNAMENT
TO THE CAUSE OF LIBERTY AND RATIONAL RELIGION.
HAVING ENDURED A TEDIOUS AND SEVERE ILLNESS
WITH A RESIGNATION AND FORTITUDE
WHICH CHRISTIANTY ALONE COULD INSPIRE,
AND INTEGRITY ALONE EXERT,
HE OBTAINED HIS RELEASE JUNE 14th, 1762,
AGED 55 YEARS.

IN MEMORY OF
THE REV. DAVID EVANS,
MINISTER OF THIS PLACE UPWARDS OF FORTY YEARS:
HIS LIFE WAS SPENT IN
THE ACQUISITION OF LIBERAL AND USEFUL KNOWLEDGE,
AND IN THE DUTIES OF RELIGION.
HE WAS A FIRM BELIEVER IN CHRISTIANITY FROM CONVICTION,
AND IN HIM CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY LOST A MOST
ZEALOUS AND ENLIGHTENED ADVOCATE.
HE DEPARTED THIS LIFE JUNE 14th, 1817,
IN THE 67th YEAR OF HIS AGE.

Ministers.

GEORGE SEAL	1680—
PATERSON, LOAD, and HORT ...	
ANGEL SHAPLAND	—1748.
EVAN THOMAS	1748—1762.
RICHARD DAVIS	1762—1765.
WILLIAM HAZLITT, M.A.	1765—1770.
DAVID EVANS	1770—1791.
WILLIAM JILLARD HORT	1791—1796.
DAVID EVANS (returned)	1796—1815.
JOHN EVANS	1816—1820.
GEORGE PULLIN HINTON	1820—1824.
SAMUEL MARTIN	1826—1827.
THOMAS ADAMS	1833.

The Rev. JOHN HORT, D.D., was probably descended from Nonconformist parents; he was educated in a Dissenting academy, in London, between the years 1690 and 1695, under the direction of the Rev. Thomas Rowe, at that time minister of

the Independent congregation at Haberdashers' Hall.* One of his fellow-students was Dr. Isaac Watts, who said of him that he was the first genius in the academy, and another was Mr. Samuel Say, also well known in the religious and literary world.

After his academical studies were finished, he resided some time as Chaplain with John Hampden, Esq., Member of Parliament for Bucks; and afterwards settled as a Dissenting minister, at Marshfield. The time of his conformity to the Church of England is not ascertained, though it is evident, that he was a minister of it so early as 1708, for in that year he published a sermon preached at the Archdeacon's visitation at Aylesbury. In the preceding year, he had printed a Thanksgiving Sermon on our Successes, from Ps. cxlix. 6—8. There is a tradition in the family, that he had so greatly recommended himself to the court by his zeal and services in support of the Hanover succession, that as he scrupled re-ordination it was dispensed with, and the first preferment bestowed on him was that of a bishopric in Ireland. He went into that kingdom as chaplain to the Lord Lieutenant. He was consecrated bishop of Ferns and Leighlin, in 1721, was translated to Kilmore and Ardagh, in 1727, and preferred to the archiepiscopal see of Tuam, in 1742, with the united bishopric of Enaghdoen, and likewise with liberty to retain his other bishopric at Ardagh. He died in 1751, at a very advanced age. He published in 1758, at Dublin, a volume of sermons, in 8vo. These were reprinted, in London, in 1757, with the addition of the Visitation Sermon mentioned before. In this volume is a sermon preached in the Castle of Dublin, before the Duke of Bolton, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, after the suppression of the Preston rebellion. He also published "Instructions to the Clergy of the Diocese of Tuam, at the Primary Visitation, July 8th, 1742." This, after his death, was reprinted in London, with the approbation and consent of Dr. Hort, Canon of Windsor. In the preface to the volume of sermons, we learn that for many years previous

* Southey's Life of Watts, prefixed to a neat edition of the Lyric Poems, forming the ninth volume of the Sacred Classics, 1834.

to its appearance from the press, the author had been disabled from preaching by an over-strain of the voice in the pulpit, at a time when he had a cold, with a hoarseness, upon him. The providence of God, he says, having taken from him the power of discharging that part of his episcopal office which consisted in preaching, he thought it incumbent upon him to convey his thoughts and instructions from the press. The solemn promise that he made at his consecration, "to exercise himself in the Holy Scriptures, so as to be able by them to teach and exhort by wholesome doctrines," was no small motive to the undertaking. It appears, that he kept up an epistolary correspondence with his "old friend," as he called him, and fellow-student, Dr. Watts, to the closing period of the life of each. Dr. Gibbons, in the life of the latter, has preserved a letter of the Archbishop of Tuam to him, dated Dublin, December 15, 1743, which accompanied the charge to his clergy. The strain of the letter is cheerful and pious, expressive of vivacity of mind, and a devotional temper. A quotation from it may afford a specimen of the disposition and character of the writer. "I bless God, I enjoy good health, which enables me to go through much business; but I have for many years been going down the hill, and if the doctrine of gravitation takes place in the life of man, the motion must accelerate as I come nearer the bottom. Your case is the same, though more aggravated by distempers. God grant we may be useful while we live, and may run clear and with unclouded minds till we come to the very dregs." *

The Rev. WILLIAM HAZLITT, M.A., was born at Shaun Hill, near Tipperary, 1737. At about the age of 19 he went to Glasgow University—remained there five years and obtained the degree of Master of Arts. Though brought up in orthodox principles, at the time of his quitting the University he was an Unitarian. His first settlement was with the Presbyterian con-

* Monthly Magazine, Vol. xv. p. 144.

gregation at Wisbeach, in 1764, where he remained two years. Here he was married to Miss Loftus of that town, by whom he had seven children, three of whom with their mother survived him. From Wisbeach he removed to Marshfield, and thence to Maidstone, where he remained nearly ten years, during which time he enjoyed the acquaintance of several eminent men, and frequently met Dr. Franklin. From Maidstone he removed, in 1780, to the charge of a congregation at Bandon, in the county of Cork, where he continued three years. In this place he exerted himself in behalf of the American prisoners confined at Kinsale, and his manly exposure, in the public prints, of the cruelties exercised towards them by the soldiery, considerably improved their condition. On the close of the war with America, he removed from Bandon, to New York, with his wife and family, where he arrived in May, 1783, and soon proceeded to Philadelphia. On his way to that city, the Assembly of the States General for New Jersey, then sitting at Burlington, sent a deputation to invite him to preach before them, which he did. At Philadelphia he stayed fifteen months, and besides preaching occasionally at various places of worship there, he delivered, during the winter, in the college, a course of lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, which were exceedingly well received. From Philadelphia he went, by invitation, to preach to a congregation at Boston; but a report of his heterodox principles arriving before him prevented a settlement among them. Mr. Hazlitt's visit to this town was not however in vain; for in a short time he was chiefly instrumental in forming the first Unitarian Church at Boston. Here the University offered to confer on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, which he declined. He also published various tracts in support of Unitarian principles; and having remained here four years, preparing the way for the subsequent exertions of Dr. Priestley, whose acquaintance he enjoyed, he returned with his family to England, and became pastor of the Presbyterian congregation at Wem, in Shropshire. In this place he resided upwards of twenty-six years, and published three volumes of sermons, which had a

rapid and extensive sale. In 1813 he retired from the ministry; and lived some time at Addlestone, in Surry, afterwards at Bath, and finally at Crediton, where, after a residence of ten months, he died. His remains were interred in the parish burial ground of the latter place, and on the following Sunday, the event was improved in the Unitarian chapel by the Rev. G. P. Hinton. The memoir in the Monthly Repository, from which these particulars are taken, concludes with the following extract from the Political Essays of William Hazlitt, the highly gifted son of the venerable minister; in which it is supposed the father was particularly alluded to:

"We have known some such in happier days, who had been brought up and lived from youth to age in the one constant belief of God and of his Christ, and who thought all other things but dross, compared with the glory hereafter to be revealed. Their youthful hopes and vanity had been mortified in them, even in their boyish days, by the neglect and supercilious regards of the world; and they turned to look into their own minds for something else to build their hopes and confidence upon. They were true priests. They set up an image in their own minds, it was truth: they worshiped an idol there, it was justice. They looked on man as their brother, and only bowed the knee to the Highest. Separate from the world, they walked humbly with their God, and lived, in thought, with those who had borne testimony of a good conscience—with the spirits of just men in all ages. They saw Moses when he slew the Egyptian, and the prophets who overturned the brazen images, and those who were stoned and sawn asunder. They were with Daniel in the lions' den, and with the three children who passed through the fiery furnace—Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. They did not crucify Christ twice over, or deny him in their hearts, with St. Peter: the Book of Martyrs was open to them; they read the story of William Tell, of John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, and the old one-eyed Zisca; they had Neal's History of the Puritans by heart, and Calamy's account of the Two Thousand Ejected Ministers, and gave it to their children to

read, with the pictures of the polemical Baxter, the silver-tongued Bancroft, the mild-looking Calamy, and old honest Howe. They believed in Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History; they were deep read in the works of the Fratres Poloni, Pripscovius, Crellius, Cracovius, who sought out truth in texts of scripture, and grew blind over Hebrew points; their aspiration after liberty was a sigh uttered from the towers, 'time-rent,' of the Holy Inquisition—and their zeal for religious toleration was kindled at the fires of Smithfield. Their sympathy was not with the oppressors, but the oppressed. They cherished in their thoughts—and wished to transmit to their posterity—those rights and privileges, for asserting which their ancestors had bled on scaffolds, or had pined in dungeons, or in foreign climes. Their creed, too, was glory to God, peace on earth, good will to man. This creed, since profaned and rendered vile, they kept fast through good report and evil report. This belief they had that looks at something out of itself, fixed as the stars, deep as the firmament; that makes of its own heart an altar to truth, a place of worship for what is right, at which it does reverence with praise and prayer like a holy thing, apart and content—that feels that the greatest Being in the universe is always near it, and that all things work together for the good of his creatures, under his guiding hand. This covenant they kept as the stars keep their courses—this principle they stuck by, as it sticks by them to the last. It grew with their growth, it does not wither in their decay. It lives when the almond tree flourishes, and is not bowed down with the tottering knees. It glimmers with the last feeble eyesight, smiles in the faded cheek like infancy, and lights a path before them to the grave."

FRENCHAY.

FRENCHAY (or more properly Froomshaw) is a pretty village, where many families have good houses with gardens and plantations.

It is situated about four miles from Bristol in the parish of Winterbourn, which is bounded on the south by the river Froom.

FRENCHAY.

THE chapel at Frenchay is a small square building, fronting the common on the skirts of which the village is situated. It has the unusual yet picturesque appendage of a bell, which, for many years, has regularly summoned the worshipers to the morning and evening sacrifice. A pretty burial ground surrounds this humble house of prayer, on three sides, and contains a great number of graves. There are several monuments; some of the inscriptions have been erased by time, but others remain to awaken respect for the memories of the dead and anxiety for the improvement of the living.

> "Their names, their years spelt by the unlettered muse,
> The place of fame and elegy supply:
> And many a holy text around she strews,
> That teach the rustic moralist to die."

The origin and exact age of the society at Frenchay are involved in uncertainty. My earliest information is obtained from the deed by which the land, occupied by the meeting-house and burial ground, was conveyed to the congregation. This document was drawn up in the year 1691 and contains the names of several of the most considerable

merchants of Bristol, as trustees. The meeting-house was probably built about this time; but I cannot find the name of a minister connected with an earlier date than 1715, when the Rev. Joseph Tyler is said to have been at Frenchay with two hundred hearers. From a subsequent deed it appears that this gentleman was pastor of the congregation, and associated as a trustee with the minister of the Lewin's Mead Chapel, and several Bristol merchants, in the year 1721. Tradition represents him as having continued in the pastoral office many years afterwards, highly respected and beloved; some persons have a strong impression that he filled it a very long time; nor is it improbable that he was here from the time of the erection of the chapel till 1741, in connexion with which year another name appears.*

Mr. Tyler appears to have been succeeded by Mr. Joshua Griffith, who was, by all accounts, at Frenchay from 1741 till his death in 1760. The next minister was Mr. David Lewis, who removed from Ashwick, some memoranda say in the latter year, and others two or three years earlier. He is mentioned, by a correspondent in the Monthly Repository for June 1810,† as having died at Frenchay thirty-eight years previously, which shews that he was there till the year 1772. This circumstance is noticed (and it is the only one I have met with in

* For much of the information in this sketch I am indebted to the friendly researches of Mr. Thomas Bowring, of Bristol.

† Vol. v., p. 401.

reference to Mr. Lewis, except that of his removal from Ashwick) in connexion with an amusing but unimportant anecdote, related by him, of Mr. Samuel Jones and a pupil of that gentleman,—Mr., afterwards Archbishop, Secker.

On the death of Mr. Lewis, the congregation made choice of Mr. Samuel Thomas, from Dulverton, a minister who still lives in the remembrance of the elder hearers. He is described as a fine specimen of the ancient Presbyterian school—a dignified, yet earnest and affectionate preacher—a true pastor of his flock—a zealous asserter of Christian liberty—pious, learned, and indefatigable. In his religious sentiments he was probably an Arian. For many years Mr. Thomas kept a large and respectable school at Hambrook, a small village near Frenchay, where he had the care of two sons of Dr. Priestley, probably, at the time of that great and good man's residence at Bowood. There are some living who have a recollection of the Doctor's preaching once or twice at Frenchay. Mr. Thomas died among his people, in 1803, full of years and honour.

The subsequent ministers have all remained a much shorter period, and, with the exception of the present pastor, removed to other places. After a short interval, Mr. Thomas was succeeded by Mr. Jillard Hort, who, in the year 1815, accepted an invitation to Cork, where he is still the minister of a large congregation. For the next nine years the little flock at Frenchay were faithfully served by Mr. Michael Maurice; of whom, as of Mr. Hort,

and the other pastors of more recent times, distant be the day when more may be said! In 1824, on Mr. Maurice's resignation, Mr. Henry Clarke succeeded him, and remained till the beginning of 1827, when he resumed his more active duties as an Unitarian missionary, which he is now discharging in connexion with his office of minister of a prosperous congregation at Dundee. Next came Mr. Henry Howse, of Bath. This gentleman had received part of his education at York, as a lay-student; when he went to Frenchay he was Secretary to the Somerset, Gloucester, and Wilts Unitarian Association. In this situation he devoted himself, about eighteen months, to pulpit and pastoral labours, solely for the purpose of promoting the chief object of that Association—the revival of drooping congregations. Mr. Howse was followed by Mr. John Forsbrey,—also one of those who, though not educated for the ministry, are desirous of devoting their talents to the promotion of truth. In the year 1830, the society elected Mr. Tingcombe, who had for many years been the minister of the Unitarian congregation at Bridgwater.

The state of the congregation at different periods of its history cannot be exactly ascertained. During the greater part of the last century the number of hearers probably varied from two to three hundred. The society has always included several highly respectable families connected by trade with the city of Bristol, and residing near the village of Frenchay.

Until within a comparatively recent period there was no other place of worship in the neighbourhood. The first that appeared in addition was a Friends' meeting-house; and still more lately a handsome church has been built immediately opposite. In the morning of the Lord's Day the sound of the ancient bell is nearly drowned by the authoritative tone of its modern neighbour, but in the evening it is heard alone through the peaceful village. The erection of the church doubtless tended to reduce the already much-diminished number of the original society, but there are still several circumstances which inspire a hope of its revival. Humble as is the structure in which the worshipers of One God the Father here meet, they have yet many reasons for associating it with their own most precious recollections, and devoutly trusting that it will be to many as it has been to them and their fathers—*the house of God and the gate of Heaven!*

Ministers.

Joseph Tyler	1691—1741.
Joshua Griffith	1741—1760.
David Lewis	1760—1772.
Samuel Thomas	1772—1803.
Jillard Hort	1804—1815.
Michael Maurice	1815—1824.
Henry Clarke	1824—1827.
Henry Edward Howse	1827—1828.
John Forsbrey	1828—1829.
John Tingcombe	1829.

Wiltshire.

CALNE.

BRADFORD.

TROWBRIDGE.

WARMINSTER.

CALNE.

"CALNE is a market and borough-town of great antiquity, situated near the centre of the hundred to which it gives name, at the distance of eighty-seven miles west by south from London, and thirty miles north-north-east from Salisbury."

"Calne within the last twenty years has been greatly improved in the appearance of its houses, and the cleanliness of its streets. It is watered by the small river Marlan, which runs through the centre of the town, and drives several fulling and grist mills. The market-house and town-hall is a commodious building, as is also the free-school."—*Beauties of England and Wales.*

Population in 1811,—3581; in 1821,—4612; in 1831,—4876.

CALNE.

THIS parish is in the list of those which lost their ministers on the passing of the Act of Uniformity. The sufferer here was Mr. Thomas Jones, who may be regarded as the founder of the Presbyterian congregation, though we have no particulars of his subsequent life and labours.

That a society of Nonconformists existed at Calne at an early period, is evident from the biographical notices by Dr. Calamy and Mr. Palmer. Mr. Robert Rowswell, ejected from the parish of Martin, in Wiltshire, and Mr. Nathaniel Webb, who lost his living at Yatesbury, in the same county, are both said to have preached here occasionally.

The first settled minister of whom we have any account is Mr. Samuel Bourn, the father of an eminent minister of the same name at Birmingham and Cosely. He was sent down to Calne in the year 1679, by the influence of Dr. Annesley, the ejected vicar of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, and the maternal grandfather of Mr. John Wesley. He laboured here, with much diligence and success, sixteen years, during which he declined invitations to Bath,

Durham, and Lincoln; at the end of that period he removed to Bolton to succeed his uncle, the Rev. Mr. Seddon, who recommended him to his flock in his last moments.*

It was probably soon after Mr. Bourn's removal that the present chapel was erected. No document of any kind remains by which the circumstances connected with this event can be traced, nor have we any means of ascertaining the precise time when the congregation appointed a successor to the highly-valued pastor who had at length been induced to leave them. They appear to have been some time destitute. We are told that, "on hearing Mr. Bourn had received unhandsome treatment in his new situation, they invited him to return to them, with respectful offers of an enlarged maintenance. But he waived the proposal and chose to continue at Bolton, where by his great integrity and inoffensive behaviour he conciliated the esteem and respect of all; and when he died had not one enemy."†

The next name on my list of the pastors of the Presbyterian church at Calne, is John Melhuish. He was there in 1715, with two hundred and fifty hearers; and as we do not find that he was connected with any other congregation, we may infer that he remained there a long time. But we have no other name until the year 1772, an interval, it may be presumed, rather too long for Mr. Melhuish's powers, especially as there is reason to suppose he was settled at Calne prior to the year

* Toulmin's Life of Bourn, p. 3. † Ibid. p. 4.

1715. In 1772 Mr. Williams was the pastor; his religious opinions were liberal. He removed to the congregation at Bradford in 1776. The people here next elected Mr. John Davis, of Ilfracombe: he was educated at Carmarthen; his sentiments were decidedly Unitarian, and he was the respected pastor of the church till his death—the long period of fifty-two years. Both Mr. Williams and Mr. Davis had the privilege of enjoying the society and assistance of Dr. Priestley; whose engagement with the Earl of Shelburne commenced in 1773 and terminated in 1780. He frequently preached in the Presbyterian meeting-house at Calne, and, by his pulpit services and private conversations, did much to confirm the sentiments then entertained both by ministers and people.*

* One of the most prominent traits in the character of Dr. Priestley was his devotion to religious pursuits. Many circumstances illustrate this, besides his identifying himself so closely with the humble Dissenting society at Calne. Alluding to the company into which he was thrown, while staying with Lord Shelburne at Paris, he says—"As I chose on all occasions to appear as a Christian, I was told by some of them that I was the only person they had ever met with, of whose understanding they had any opinion, who professed to believe Christianity. But on interrogating them on the subject, I soon found that they had given no proper attention to it, and did not really know what Christianity was. This was also the case with a great part of the company that I saw at Lord Shelburne's. But I hope that my always avowing myself to be a Christian, and holding myself ready on all occasions to defend the genuine principles of it, was not without its use. Having conversed so much with unbelievers, at home and abroad, I thought I should be able to combat their prejudices with some advantage; and with this view I wrote, while I was with Lord Shelburne, the first part of my "Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever," in proof of the doctrines of a God and a Providence, and to this I have added, during my residence at Birmingham, a second part, in defence of the Evidences of Christianity. The first part being replied to by a person who called himself Mr. Hammon, I wrote a reply to his piece which has hitherto remained unanswered. I am happy to find that this work of mine has

Towards the close of Mr. Davis's life, the congregation declined considerably. He had never been a popular preacher, and other circumstances now combined to lessen the number of his hearers. Perhaps the poorer and more uneducated part were drawn away by the stirring appeals of ministers of other denominations, who about this period settled in the town. And after the death of Mr. Davis, the society of which he had been the pastor became still smaller in consequence of the want of a settled minister for several years. Lately they have possessed the services of Mr. Taylor, who was educated for the ministry among the Calvinistic Baptists, under Dr. Ryland, at Bristol, but subsequently became an Unitarian. He labours amidst many discouragements; the salary is very small, there being only one endowment of about three pounds per annum, bequeathed a few years since; and the prospect of an increase in the congregation is exceedingly faint.*

done some good, and I hope that in due time it will do more. I can truly say that the greatest satisfaction I receive from the success of my philosophical pursuits, arises from the weight it may give to my attempts to defend Christianity, and to free it from those corruptions which prevent its reception with philosophical and thinking persons, whose influence with the vulgar and the unthinking is very great."—PRIESTLEY'S Works; RUTT'S Edition. Vol. i. Part. i., p. 199.

* In Dr. Priestley's time the society was small. Writing to Dr. Toulmin in 1776, he says, "We have lost our minister, Mr. Williams. I have sent an invitation to Mr. Jervis's brother, but I do not think him likely to accept it. Can you in that case recommend any one to us? There are two places to serve, at the distance of seven miles, and together they raise £45, exclusive of assistance from the funds."—RUTT'S Priestley, Vol. i. Part i., p. 296.

There is a small piece of land adjoining the chapel which might have been converted into a cemetery. Two members of the congregation have been lately interred within the building.

Ministers.

Thomas Jones	1662—
Nathaniel Webb	
Robert Rowswell	
Samuel Bourn	1679—1695.
John Melhuish	1715—
Edward Williams	1772—1776.
John Davis.....	1777—1829.
—— Taylor	1831.

Mr. Bourn was descended from ancestors who distinguished themselves by their ingenious and public-spirited plans. His grandfather and great grandfather were clothiers in Derby, and expended considerable sums of money to convey water into that town. An uncle, Mr. Robert Seddon, an eminent minister, who in 1662 was ejected from the rectory of Langley, in Derbyshire, took him early under his patronage, and sent him to Emanuel College, Cambridge, where he remained till 1672. He left the university without taking any degree, not being satisfied with the oaths and declarations then required.

Mr. Bourn, on leaving Cambridge, returned to Derby, and employed himself for some time in a school. He then became chaplain to Lady Hatton. His next removal was to London, where he was ordained, and lived some time with an aunt. From London he removed to Calne, and thence to Bolton, where he died in 1719, in the seventy-second year of his age.

His son thus described the consistency and excellence of his character. "Though he shone in the *pulpit*, he did not shine *only* there; nor was he like those physicians who prescribe large or unpalatable doses of physic to their patients, but take none themselves. He lived the truths he preached; and did not stand as a Mercury on the highway, that shews travellers the road, but keeps its place while they pass on. He did not press on you humility and lowliness of mind, with a proud heart of his own. He did not recommend temperance, and go into excesses himself. He did not rally against oppression, and in the mean time bear hard on the poor. He did not beg charity to the distressed, to the lecture, for building houses of worship, and withhold his own. He did not preach up the heavenly world to you, and all the time pursue only this world. He did not put you on diligence in your proper callings, and neglect his own callings; for to this work, the work of the ministry, he gave up all his strength. He visibly wore away in his work, and did not rust away."

His charity was eminent. He spared neither his pains nor his purse. Many good works commenced with him and were encouraged by him. He was free of his own, and had an excellent talent of soliciting the charity of others. With him originated a small school for teaching twenty poor children; and for several years he entirely supported it. At his death he left a legacy of twenty pounds to maintain the weekly lecture at Bolton. Yet his income was by no means large; and though his people were abundantly able to increase his salary, he never appeared uneasy at its amount. His sentiments on doctrinal points were consonant to those of Calvin and the reformed churches: but his humility, candour, and affectionate temper would not allow him to be censorious or uneasy with any of his brethren.

After his death, his son published a volume of his sermons, apprehending that "a specimen of his father's way of preaching might be instructive to young ministers, and contribute to preserve them from degenerating into loose and empty harangues,

that want spirit and life. They are entitled, I. The transforming vision of Christ in the future state. II. The believer's hope of this transforming vision, the reason and the real motive of real holiness in the present state." To these discourses is subjoined the funeral sermon for the author, with a delineation of his character and memoirs of his life, by Mr. William Tong, an eminent minister of that day.*

* Toulmin's Life of Bourn.

BRADFORD.

"BRADFORD or BRADENFORD is a considerable market and manufacturing town, situated on the banks of the Avon, at the distance of about thirty miles north-west from Salisbury, and one hundred miles south-west from London. The natural features of the country are bold and romantic: an abrupt hill rises immediately on the north side of the river; and on the brow and sloping declivity of this eminence most of the buildings are placed. It derived its name, according to Camden, from its local position close to a broad ford on the river; *Braden* in Saxon signifying broad.

"The Kennet and Avon Canal passes by Bradford, and opens a communication, by water carriage, with the cities of Bath, Bristol and London, and with the towns of Trowbridge, Devizes, Hungerford, Reading, &c. This canal, in its way towards Bathford, follows the course of the Avon, which it crosses at different points on aqueduct bridges, one of which is near Bradford. The banks of this river, below the town, exhibit many beautiful and picturesque scenes. The sides of the hills are covered with a profusion of trees, and in some places rise with great boldness from the margin of the river."—*Beauties of England and Wales.*

Population in 1811,—2989; in 1821,—3760; and in 1831,—3642.

GROVE MEETING.

This is an old Presbyterian place of worship. Of its origin and earliest history I can discover no traces. A Mr. Dangerfield was its minister towards the close of the seventeenth century.* In 1715, Mr. Thomas Barker filled that office, and continued to do so till 1729, when he removed. He was succeeded by Mr. Read, a friend of the unhappy Mr. Simon Browne, of Shepton Mallet. After Mr. Read came Dr. Roger Flexman, who officiated from 1739 to 1747, and then accepted an invitation to be pastor of a society at Rotherhithe. In 1748, the congregation at Bradford chose Mr. Samuel Billingsley, probably a member of the excellent family at Ashwick, in Somersetshire; ten years afterwards he removed to Peckham. There is now an interval of some years, with regard to which I cannot write with certainty. Mr. James Foot, who came from Chard, was here in 1763, and it is probable that he was the immediate successor of Mr. Billingsley. He was a pupil of Dr. Doddridge; the exact year of his death cannot be ascertained, but it appears to have been about 1777. He was succeeded by

* Communicated, with other particulars, by Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Williams, concerning whom I am only able to state that he removed from Calne; that, having a family and a small income, he engaged in some secular employment; and that he died in the year 1810.

Since this time there has been much irregularity in the proceedings of the society at Bradford. For a long time previously its number had been small; and circumstances now occurred which rendered the task of reviving it exceedingly difficult. Like many others of the same denomination, it had gradually adopted Unitarian views of the Gospel. So early as the year 1793, forms of prayer, avowedly reprinted from an edition "used in the Unitarian Chapel at Manchester," were used in the Grove Meeting. But, after the death of Mr. Williams, a Mr. Combe preached some time in this place of worship, and, not being acceptable to the congregation, probably on account of his orthodox sentiments, a new chapel was erected for him in the same town. Mr. John Evans, of Bristol, then supplied the Unitarians for a short period; but, not meeting with sufficient encouragement, he relinquished the office, and the meeting-house was lent to a body of Trinitarian Dissenters for many years. In 1822, Mr. Richard Wright, the Unitarian Missionary, having settled with the General Baptist congregation at Trowbridge, a neighbouring town, obtained permission to re-open the Grove Meeting for the worship of One God the Father. This he did, and continued to officiate there every Sunday

morning during the five years he remained in Wiltshire; by which means a small congregation was re-established.* In 1827, Mr. Samuel Martin succeeded Mr. Wright as pastor of the church at Trowbridge, and also for some time regularly carried on the morning service at Bradford, adding an evening service in the course of the week; but the claims on his time and attention at length obliged him to render his visits less frequent. For those visits he has never received any remuneration; on the contrary, he has made pecuniary sacrifices, the congregation being very small, and the endowment scarcely sufficient to answer its purpose of keeping the building in repair.

Ministers.

—— Dangerfield	16—
Thomas Barker	1715—1729.
—— Read	1729—1739.
Roger Flexman, D.D.	1739—1747.
Samuel Billingsley	1748—1758.
James Foot	1759—1776.
Edward Williams	1777—1810.
Richard Wright	1822—1827.
Samuel Martin.....	1827.

* Christian Reformer, Vol. xv. p. 122.

ROGER FLEXMAN was born in 1707-8, at Great Torrington, in Devonshire, where his father was a respectable manufacturer. At fifteen years of age, he was admitted into the Academy at Tiverton, under the care of the Rev. John Moor. His improvement and general conduct during five years gave such satisfaction to Mr. Moor, that he solicited his assistance as a tutor. His views, however, were directed to the public exercise of his profession. In 1730, he was ordained at Modbury, but did not continue long there. Having officiated at Crediton five years,* and at Chard four years, he settled at Bradford at the end of 1739. In 1747, he removed to Rotherhithe, and married the daughter of Mr. Yerbury, a respectable member of the society at Bradford. In his new situation his labours were acceptable and useful. But after some time, the congregation suffered much by the death of some members and the removal of others. The precarious state of Dr. Flexman's health rendered it necessary for him to withdraw from frequent service, and to reside in a part of the town where he could enjoy the benefit of the advice of a medical friend. All these circumstances induced him in 1783 to resign his charge at Rotherhithe; and in consequence of that event the society dissolved. He continued, however, to officiate as morning lecturer at St. Helen's, an office to which he was chosen in 1754; and he preached occasionally at other places as long as his health allowed. He died June 14, 1795, in his 88th year.

The following particulars are taken from Dr. A. Rees's funeral sermon. Dr. Flexman's mental abilities and literary acquirements were considerable. He was particularly noted for his extensive and accurate acquaintance with the history of England. So retentive was his memory that it superseded the necessity of recurring to written authorities, and served him for the recital of the most obscure dates and facts. This rendered him capable of communicating important information upon a

* Mr. Wilson's statement. That author does not mention Mr. Flexman's settlement at Bow. See Eng. Presb., p. 165.

variety of occasions; and he was often consulted by men of the first rank and character. In political discussions, as well as in researches of a literary kind, his knowledge was of great service. It gave him access to many members of both houses of parliament, who availed themselves of hints and references with which he supplied them; and it led him to form an acquaintance with several eminent scholars and writers. The only pecuniary advantage of any moment which he derived from connexions of this kind, arose from his appointment to be one of the compilers of the General Index to the Journals of the House of Commons. Volumes viii., ix., x., and xi., comprehending the parliamentary proceedings from 1660 to 1697, were assigned to him. This elaborate work was begun in 1776, and completed in 1780. But such pursuits did not prevent his application to subjects immediately connected with his sacred profession. The study of the Scriptures, and particularly of the New Testament, in the original languages, was an employment to which he devoted much time, and in which he took peculiar pleasure. His sentiments on theological subjects chiefly coincided with those of Dr. Amory and Dr. Samuel Clarke. Dr. Flexman was also distinguished for his integrity. He was intimately acquainted with several dignified clergymen; and we are assured that a considerable preferment was actually offered him. But he continued to exercise his ministry among the Dissenters, notwithstanding many difficulties and discouragements. Highly esteeming many members of the Establishment, and equally respected by them, he maintained his own profession without wavering. On many occasions he approved himself an enlightened and strenuous advocate for civil and religious liberty. His abilities and various attainments justly entitled him to a degree of D.D., which was conferred upon him in 1770, by the Marischal College of Aberdeen.*

* Wilson's Hist. Vol. iv. p. 361; and Dr. A. Rees's Funeral Sermon.

TROWBRIDGE.

"CAMDEN says that its proper name is Trubridge, which means a firm and trusty bridge. Leland writes it Thoroughbridge; and Gough, as well as the author of Magna Britannia, Trolbridge. The reason alleged for the last name is, that 'beside the natural melting of *i* into *u*, there is a tithing in the liberty and parish called Troll, and a large common near it of the same name.'"

"Like the generality of manufacturing towns, Trowbridge is very irregularly built. None of the streets seem to have been formed according to any predetermined plan, but to have been arranged, constructed, and altered according as private interest, caprice, or convenience might suggest. Hence, though there are several handsome houses in the town, they appear to great disadvantage from the narrowness of the passage in front, and the intermixture of old and shabby-looking buildings."

The woollen manufacture, in which a large number of the inhabitants are engaged, was first established here in the early part of the reign of Henry VIII., under the auspices of the Earl of Hertford, afterwards Duke of Somerset, to whom the town, as belonging to the Duchy of Lancaster, had been granted by the crown. The cloths now principally manufactured in this town are broad cloths and kerseymeres.—*Beauties of England and Wales.*

Population in 1811,—6075; in 1821,—9545; in 1831,—10,863.

CONIGRE MEETING.

GENERAL BAPTIST.

At the beginning of the last century there were many General Baptist churches in the county of Wiltshire. In the histories of their denomination frequent mention is made of the district meetings which they were accustomed to hold for purposes of religious fellowship. As new sects sprung up, the zeal of many of the brethren on behalf of baptism was weakened; some congregations, particularly in the smaller towns, became quite extinct; and others gradually adopted the tenets and assumed the name of Particular or Calvinistic Baptists.

The society at Trowbridge is one of the oldest in the kingdom. There is a tradition that it was formed some years before the passing of the Act of Uniformity. But the church-book was not commenced till 1714; nor are there any traces of more ancient records. It is evident, however, from the number of names subjoined to the first memorandum, that the congregation had existed many years. The memorandum is as follows: "We, the church of Christ, baptized on the personal profession of our own faith, usually meeting in

Trowbridge and Southwick, whose names are hereafter subscribed, do agree that this be our church book, or our book to register the proceedings of our church meetings, and to be kept by one of our pastors for that purpose. July 30, 1714." Signed by two pastors, three ministers, four deacons, and two hundred and twenty-four members.

The church met for a long time at the two places here mentioned. They are three miles apart; a meeting-house had been built in each, there being distinct congregations though a community of pastors, ministers, and deacons. The first pastors on record are Mr. John Lawes and Mr. John Davisson, who were probably free from all secular employments, and devoted entirely to the duties of preaching, administering the ordinances, and visiting. The ministers were Mr. James Edwards, Mr. Thomas Lucas, and Mr. Edward Evans; they appear to have been engaged in business, and to have been selected from the general body of members on account of their superior attainments and other qualifications for assisting in the work of public instruction. It was customary among the General Baptist churches of this period to select a new pastor, in the event of the removal of an old one, from the ministers; and there are instances of the gradual promotion of deacons, first to the office of minister and then to that of pastor, they being also originally chosen on account of their knowledge of the Scriptures, the steadfastness of their faith, and the purity of their lives.

The meeting-house at Trowbridge, in which one section of this flourishing church met at the time of the commencement of their register, is still standing. It is built in a style which indicates that the worshipers were opulent as well as numerous. The roof consists of several arches, curiously constructed and supported by two large pillars. There are three galleries, a baptistery, and a vestry. Beneath the pews are several vaults, in which, as well as in the cemetery adjoining, are the remains of many of the most influential and intelligent families of the town. The walls are ornamented by tablets to the memory of Messrs. Lucas, D. Jones, and W. Waldron, ministers of the congregation; also by a monument with the names of all the other ministers, erected at the expense of Mr. Martin. Soon after this indefatigable man became the pastor of the church the sounding board was removed, and he caused to be inscribed over the pulpit in gold letters, "JESUS CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS." The appropriateness of this inscription is recognized by all who are acquainted with the style of Mr. Martin's preaching and the circumstances in which he exercises his ministry.

Mr. Lawes, whose name appears first on our list of pastors, is said to have died in the year 1714, and his colleague, Mr. Davisson, in 1721. The latter was the author of two works, entitled "De Ordinatione Dissertatio Historica," and "A Vindication of the Protestant Dissenter's Mission, a sermon preached at Taunton, June 7, 1720." He

also superintended an academy for the education of young men for the ministry. Mr. Davisson was succeeded both in the pastoral charge and in the office of tutor by Mr. Thomas Lucas, one of the ministers.* He was the author of an excellent sermon "On Compulsion in Matters of Conscience," some extracts from which, advocating the principles contended for in the present day in the same pulpit, may be found in the Christian Reformer.† There is a Latin inscription on a monument in the chapel, pointing out the spot where his remains were interred, and commemorating his high mental and moral qualifications for setting forth "pure and undefiled religion;" he died after a short illness in 1741. Mr. Lucas was followed by Mr. W. Waldron, a native of Southmolton, in Devonshire. He went to Trowbridge for his education, became a good classical scholar, and an eloquent and dignified preacher. Having a family, he deemed it prudent to engage in the clothing trade, which he carried on with great success. He was pastor of the church upwards of fifty years, and died in 1794. It appears that he was assisted for some time in the ministry by a Mr. Cure. The following entry is found in the register of burials: "The Rev. John Cure was buried in a vault near the pillar in the south aisle, Nov. 17, 1762, aged 27 years."

* To this academy were voted, in the year 1737, certain books belonging to the General Baptist church, Paul's Alley, Barbican.—WILSON, Vol. iii. p. 231.

† O. S., Vol. ix. p. 235.

Mr. Waldron's successor was Mr. Thomas Twining, of whose life I shall give a short sketch elsewhere. I am also enabled to furnish a distinct memoir of the next minister, Mr. Daniel Jones. But it may be desirable to introduce here a few particulars of the state of the congregation during his ministry.* He found at Trowbridge a small but peaceable society, and resumed those exertions to revive the General Baptist cause which he had made in other places. In this work he was successful; his hearers soon increased, and many were united to the church. Nor were his labours confined to this spot. In conjunction with a few of his brethren of the General Baptist persuasion, he formed district quarterly meetings in the counties of Wilts, Somerset, and Dorset. I have not been able to ascertain how long these meetings were continued, but they are said by Mr. David, the biographer of Mr. Jones, to have "contributed to promote the knowledge of rational religion, awaken attention to free inquiry, and cherish just and liberal sentiments." "In sentiment," continues Mr. David, "Mr. Jones was a General Unitarian Baptist, and an advocate for free communion. His public discourses were plain and practical, but enforced by motives drawn from the Christian revelation, and delivered generally extempore, with a pleasing degree of animation. The devotional parts of worship he conducted in a free, unrestrained

* Mon. Rep. Vol. v. p. 201.

spirit of piety, equally removed from formality and affectation."

For some years the Trowbridge congregation had been approaching the sentiments defended by Mr. Jones. Several of his predecessors had distinguished themselves by the candour and earnestness with which they sought for truth and advocated the rights of conscience. There was nothing in the constitution of the society to discourage them. It is true that in one respect the early discipline of the church was rigid; from 1714 to 1724, there were many expulsions in consequence of immorality; but there is no instance of excommunication or even admonition, in consequence of supposed erroneous opinions. A bad life seems to have been the only heresy of which the Trowbridge congregation have ever taken notice. Nor is there the slightest intimation that the church was ever Trinitarian or Calvinistic,—that its members were ever required to do more than profess their faith in the Gospel, and endeavour to govern their conduct by its precepts. In the year 1806 Mr. Jones made the following entry: "We have had much trouble from the Particular Baptists, who insinuate themselves whenever they can among our *weaker* members, and make the grossest misrepresentations of our doctrine." All the successors of Mr. Jones have been decided Unitarians. Mr. Gisburne and Mr. Wright were celebrated for their zeal in advocating the unpopular doctrines of their denomination; and the present minister is not less firm, although honour-

ably characterized by a practical and truly evangelical style of preaching.

The congregation began to decline soon after other Dissenters erected their standards. About the year 1800, the meeting-house at Southwick being found no longer serviceable was taken down. In the town of Trowbridge there are now seven worshiping assemblies besides that connected with the Established Church. Of the latter, the Rev. G. Crabbe was for many years the minister; and while his talents as a poet gained the admiration of his countrymen generally, his liberality as a clergyman secured the respectful regard of his townsmen.*

* The following remarks were made by Mr. Martin, in the General Baptist pulpit, at the close of his sermon on Sunday evening, February 12, 1832.

"I cannot conclude the sacred services of this hallowed day, without adverting to the loss we have all sustained by the death of the venerable Rector of this parish. He was, in every sense of the word, a good man, and one who has scarcely left his like behind. Kind in his disposition, affectionate in his manners, charitable in his principles, beneficent in his actions, and liberal with his property, few were more deservedly honoured, or more universally beloved. Truly may it be said of him, in the beautiful language of Job: 'When the ear heard him, then it blessed him; and when the eye saw him, it gave witness to him. He delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him; and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.'

"While attached to the church of which he was a minister, and firmly maintaining the principles he professed, he was no bigot. The spirit of party which (alas, for the interests of religion!) prevails to such an unhappy extent in this town and neighbourhood, never stained his character. He was a lover of all good men, and like the holy Apostle of old, could say in the sincerity of his soul, 'Grace be with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ.' His memory will live in the grateful recollection of the wise and good, when that of narrow-minded bigots shall have passed into oblivion. Rich in years and usefulness, he came to his grave like a shock of corn in full season."—*Bath Journal.*

At the time of Mr. Martin's election, March, 1827, three fourths of the people were Dissenters; the number of General Baptists, however, was very small, and the affairs of their church in a bad state. In consequence of the timely and zealous exertions of the new minister, followed by the Divine blessing, the society now wears a different aspect. During the last seven years many members have been added to the church by baptism. The number of hearers now generally amounts to about 130 in the morning, 200 in the afternoon, and 300 in the evening. In addition to these services they have one of the same kind on Thursday evening, and prayer meetings on Sunday morning and Monday evening. One of the most interesting characteristics of this congregation is, that the majority of its members are in the humblest walks of life, yet find the simple truths of Unitarianism amply sufficient. Mr. Martin and his friends have also established or infused fresh vigour into several charitable institutions connected with the chapel, one of which is a well conducted Sunday-school, consisting of 150 scholars, supported by an annual collection. In the present year the trust-deeds have been renewed, and the chapel put in complete repair, at an expense of one hundred and forty pounds. It is gratifying to observe the regularity with which all the proceedings of the church have been lately recorded in the original book. The annual letters to the general assembly, never copied among the minutes before 1827, now appear in their proper

place and furnish interesting and important information respecting the gradual improvement of the congregation. Long may both pastor and people continue to see their pious labours prosper, and may the God of truth whom they so faithfully endeavour to serve, *make them glad according to the days in which they have been afflicted and the years in which they have seen evil.*

The following are among the monumental inscriptions:

In memory of the Rev. William Waldron, who was for fifty years Pastor of the church of Christ in this place. He departed this life 21st January, 1794, in the 79th year of his age, and is interred near this place.

In memory of the Rev. Daniel Jones, who was Pastor of this church for ten years. He died March 14th, 1810, in the 41st year of his age, and is interred near this spot.

Ministers.

John Lawes	1710—1714.
John Davisson	1712—1721.
Thomas Lucas	1721—1743.
William Waldron	1743—1794.
Thomas Twining	1794—1799.
Daniel Jones	1800—1810.
William Jones	1811—1812.
John Gisburne	1813—1822.
Richard Wright	1822—1827.
Samuel Martin	1827.

The Rev. THOMAS TWINING was born at Haverfordwest, in 1746. In 1761, he commenced his academical studies in London, under Dr. Jennings and the Rev. S. M. Savage. After the decease of the former, and the removal of the seminary to Hoxton, he completed his course of education under Mr. Savage, Dr. Kippis, and Dr. Rees. His first settlement was at Exeter, in 1768, with a society that seceded from a Particular Baptist congregation. In the same year he removed to Downton, Wilts, on an invitation from a congregation of General Baptists. He was ordained as their pastor in May, 1775; and continued in this connexion till 1777. He then went to Trowbridge, and became a colleague with Mr. Waldron, on whose death he was chosen pastor. Mr. Twining died suddenly, July 11, 1799. In the month of May preceding, he had visited his friends, and had preached before the General Baptist Assembly, in Worship Street. On the 3rd of July, the annual meeting of the Western Unitarian Society was held at Warminster. Mr. Twining attended, apparently in perfect health and spirits; and from *a sense of duty*, as he expressed it, became a member. The prospect of aid which the institution beheld in his character and abilities, was soon overclouded. Soon after he had given it his sanction, he was seized in the street at Trowbridge, before he reached his own home, and immediately expired. It is remarkable that, when he left his family in the morning, he took a more than usually affectionate leave of them; and he was uncommonly cheerful all the day.

During his residence in Exeter, he married Miss Ann Kennaway, daughter of Mr. Robert Kennaway, fuller and maltster, by whom he had seven children. Mrs. Twining died in 1788, and of their children only two daughters survived their worthy father. Mr. Twining had learning and abilities; he was a judicious, though not popular preacher, and a man of unfeigned worth and goodness. In consequence of much study and inquiry, his religious sentiments underwent a great change; he began life

a Calvinist, and died a Unitarian. His discourses, sixteen of which were published by his friend Dr. Toulmin, afford a picture of the man. They contain the sentiments of his open, honest, liberal, and inquiring mind, and are descriptive of the benevolence, integrity, and artless simplicity of his character. In 1786, he published "A Discourse on Baptism; containing remarks and observations on Dr. Priestley's chapters on the same subject. By Philalethes." This is a useful pamphlet; it discovers a liberal spirit, and great good sense. He also printed a tract, entitled "A short History of the Pharisees, with a parallel between the ancient and modern." *

Mr. DANIEL JONES was the son of Richard Jones, woollen manufacturer, of Tresach, in the county of Carmarthen. Being fond of mechanical pursuits, he was apprenticed to a clock and watch maker; but his master soon after died, and he gave up the pursuit of that business. It was about this time his mind was seriously impressed with the importance of religion, and this led him eventually to become a member of a Calvinistic Baptist church at Panteg. That society soon perceived the modest merit and intellectual powers of young Jones, and recommended him as a candidate for the Christian ministry to the Baptist Academy at Bristol, then under the direction of Dr. Caleb Evans. Having finished his studies in the year 1792, he was invited to settle in Swansea with a society composed partly of persons who had separated themselves from the old meeting-house in High Street, and had erected a place of worship in the Back Lane, in the same town: this was a Particular Baptist church. On beginning his labours here, he was highly approved of, and was ordained the first year of his settlement. But there had been noticed in the Principality, several years before, a spirit of inquiry amongst some of the leading teachers in the Calvinistic Baptist connexion, which led many to doubt

* Toulmin's Memoir of Twining, prefixed to the Volume of Sermons.

the truth of some popular opinions. Mr. Jones was by no means an inattentive spectator to what was passing; on the contrary, the discussions which had taken place led him to reconsider his creed by the test of Scripture; and the careful study of the New Testament proved fatal to his "orthodoxy." It was not long before he was suspected of a departure from the popular faith, by a departure from *unscriptural terms and phrases*. Although his friends and admirers were numerous both in and out of the society at this period, yet as a lover of peace, and one who cultivated the spirit of his Master, he did not think it his duty to continue any longer in a situation that promised him more trouble than comfort, and more difficulty than usefulness. In the year 1800, Mr. Jones settled at Trowbridge, in consequence of an unanimous invitation; and here he remained till he died. The closing scene of his pilgrimage was interesting, but natural. A life of piety, obedience, and benevolence, may reasonably be expected to end in peace, if not in triumph. During his illness, he expressed to his friends his entire satisfaction in his Unitarian sentiments. To him they appeared full of harmony and consolation. He often remarked, that while he retained Calvinistic and Trinitarian opinions, he felt perplexed in performing acts of devotion, and in keeping his view on the proper object of it. His more recent faith was not devoid of consolation; he exulted in the thought, "That all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ"; here he found a centre of rest; and, consequently, his hope was full of immortality! *

Mr. GISBURNE was born at Gisborough, in Yorkshire. His parents being members of the Established Church, he probably learned its doctrines and for some time attended upon its services. But at an early period of life he used his judgment, and followed the dictates of his conscience with respect to re-

* Mon. Rep. Vol. v. p. 199.

ligious subjects. At eighteen years of age he joined the Wesleyan Methodists; and soon became a preacher. In 1798, he went to Scotland, and remained there about three years. He then returned to England, and continued to labour as a Methodist minister till the spring of 1803; when he changed his opinions respecting Baptism, and was publicly baptized at Worcester. The Baptist society at Soham being without a minister, he was recommended to them for three months, and soon afterwards settled with them. Even then he entertained just and enlarged notions upon the subject of religious liberty; he possessed, indeed, a mind too powerful to be fettered by human creeds, a spirit too investigating to be confined within boundaries prescribed by man. Subscription to certain articles of faith being required as a qualification for union with the society at Soham, the following was part of his reply to their invitation to him: "I have never subscribed to any human formulary of faith, and never intend to do it. I look upon myself as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, consequently it is impossible for me to submit to any other authority. I intend to maintain my liberty, and will never be brought under bondage by any. On no account can I ever think of subscribing to any book but the Bible." This led to serious conversation, and at length the whole church, excepting one person, agreed "to reject all articles of faith and covenants of human manufacture, as binding on any member, and subscribe to the sacred Scriptures alone." He then became their pastor, and, for several years, his services were much approved. Not satisfied, however, without pursuing his religious inquiries, he eventually saw that some of the doctrines which he had believed were unscriptural. When the change in his sentiments was made known, a few of his hearers withdrew from his services, while the majority adhered to him and embraced his principles. Soon afterwards, the seceders resolved to return and eject him. Finding other means ineffectual, they at length determined to keep him out of the chapel by force, and for this purpose locked it up after one of the morning services. One of the trustees would not

consent to have the afternoon worship thus prevented, and opened a window, at which Mr. Gisburne entered to unfasten the door. A constable, though without a warrant, immediately took him into custody, and kept him five hours in confinement. The contending parties were then heard before two clerical magistrates, and the Calvinists bound over to prosecute at the next Cambridge assizes. Mr. Gisburne, on this occasion, applied to the Committee of the Unitarian Fund. They advised him to procure a temporary place of worship, and sent their Secretary with an attorney to the assizes. Cross indictments were preferred against the prosecutors. The grand jury threw out the bill lodged against Mr. Gisburne, and found as true two bills presented by the solicitor of the Fund. Mr. Gisburne and his friends, unwilling to take an unfair advantage of this victory, adhered to a proposal they had made, of submitting the dispute to amicable arrangement. It was then agreed that Mr. G. should stop all proceedings against the rioters, and relinquish the old meeting-house, on condition of receiving from the opposite party a sum towards the erection of a new one. This, having been built, was opened early in 1810. In the spring of 1812, the pastor received an unanimous invitation from Trowbridge, which he accepted. In 1822, he was visited with an affliction by which he was wholly disabled for public services, and his family brought into great distress. At this time of need, the Almighty Friend in whom he had trusted did not forsake him. His case excited the sympathy of many persons in various parts of the kingdom, who kindly and promptly afforded their aid. By the advice of friends, he removed to Soham with his family about half a year after his illness commenced, and there he finished his mortal course May 4th, 1826, in the 49th year of his age. *

* Mon. Rep. Vol. xxi. p. 302.

WARMINSTER.

"WEREMINSTER, Werminster or Warminster, is situated on a plain immediately beneath a long tract of verdant down extending as far as Bratton Camp.

"One long street passes through the town; but in the middle of the last century it was so full of deep hollow ways that you might step from the foot path to the top of a loaded waggon.

"This town has been long celebrated for its great and ready-money corn market, held weekly on Saturday; a sack belonging to every load of wheat and of other grain is pitched in the open street and the purchases are made between the hours of eleven and one.

"The clothing trade in woollen cloths was formerly carried on here to a considerable extent; but in consequence of the introduction of machinery and many other causes, it has dwindled almost to nothing."

Sir R. C HOARE.

Population in 1811,—4866; in 1821,—5612; in 1831,—6115.

OLD MEETING.

THE seeds of Nonconformity in Warminster were probably sown by Mr. William Gough, who kept a school and preached here before the restoration.

In the year 1662 he was rector of Inkpin, in Berkshire, and was deprived of his living on the fatal Bartholomew Day. He remained at Inkpin, however, till the passing of the Corporation Act, when he removed to Earl Stoke, between Warminster and Devizes, and proved very useful to many infant churches.*

Several ministers were ejected from the neighbourhood of Warminster by the Act of Uniformity. Small societies were immediately formed by their adherents, and meetings were held in retired places as often as possible. The history of the Dissenters in this town cannot be traced with precision farther back than the year 1687, when James the Second issued his declaration for liberty of conscience. It appears from the church book, which has been kept with unusual exactness, that Mr. Compton South preached to the congregation and probably became its pastor in that year. But the society

* Noncon. Mem. Vol. i. p. 228.

had then been in existence some time and was one of the most important in this part of the kingdom. Dr. Calamy informs us, that "Mr. South was invited by a numerous people at Warminster to undertake half the service of that great congregation."*

His colleague was Mr. John Buckler, who had officiated privately a considerable time, and was the principal instrument of forming the church. He also carried on the business of a maltster, and might have chosen for his motto, "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." About the year 1690 he was committed to Salisbury gaol for preaching without a license, and the congregation immediately collected a sum of money for the supply of his wants in prison.† A portrait of this sufferer for

* Non. Mem. Vol. ii. p. 497.

† It is well known that for many years after the Revolution, the power of the High Church party remained fatally strong in every part of the kingdom. Hence, the trifling circumstance that Mr. Buckler preached without a license was sufficient to immure him in a dungeon, to the serious injury of his health, his business, and the interests of the congregation. Here, I would avail myself of an extract from a lately published and highly valuable work, for the purpose of shewing the hardships to which the Dissenters were subject at the period so frequently mentioned in this volume.—"As imprisonment (says Sir James Mackintosh, writing of the year 1687,) is always the safest punishment for an oppressor to inflict, so it was in that age, in England, perhaps the most cruel. Some estimate of the sad state of a man, in suffering the extremity of cold, hunger and nakedness, in one of the dark and noisome dungeons then called prisons, may be formed by the remains of such buildings which industrious benevolence has not yet every where demolished. Being subject to no regulation, and without means of regular sustenance for prisoners, they were at once the scene of debauchery and famine. The Puritans, the most severely moral men of any age, were crowded in cells with those profligate and ferocious criminals with whom the kingdom then abounded. We are told by Thomas Ellwood, the Quaker, a friend of Milton, that when in prison in Newgate for his religion, he saw the heads and quarters of men, executed for treason, kept for some time close to the cells, and the

conscience' sake has been preserved by his descendants, some of whom are still interested in the welfare of the society. At the close of the seventeenth century, various ministers officiated occasionally, especially Messrs. Clarke of Shaftesbury, Titford, Smith, Rossiter, Phillips and Dangerfield; and in the year 1692 the celebrated William Penn addressed the congregation.

Until the year 1704, the Dissenters at Warminster assembled in a barn fitted up as a place of worship. They then erected the present building, which was opened October the 8th, 1704, by Dr. Cotton from Boston, North America. This eminent minister built a house for himself in Warminster

heads tossed about in sport by the hangmen and the more hardened malefactors. The description given by George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, of his own treatment when a prisoner at Launceston, too clearly exhibits the unbounded power of gaolers and its most cruel exercise. It was no wonder that when prisoners were brought to trial, at the assizes, the contagion of gaol fever should often rush forth with them from these abodes of all that was loathsome, and hideous, and sweep away judges, and jurors, and advocates with its pestilential blast. The mortality of such prisons must have surpassed the imaginations of more civilized times; and death, if it could be separated from the long sufferings which led to it, might perhaps be considered as the most merciful part of the prison discipline of that age. It would be exceedingly hard to estimate its amount, even if the difficulty were not enhanced by the prejudices which led either to extenuation or aggravation. Prisoners were then so forgotten that tables of their mortality were not to be expected, and the very nature of that atrocious wickedness which employs imprisonment as the instrument of murder, would, in many cases, render it impossible distinctly and palpably to shew the process by which cold and hunger beget long distempers only to be closed by mortal disease. The computations have been attempted, as was natural, by the sufferers. William Penn, a man of such virtue as to make his testimony weighty, even when borne to the sufferings of his party, publicly affirmed at the time, that since the restoration *more than 5,000 persons had died in bonds for matters of mere conscience to God.*—Sir J. MACKINTOSH'S *History of the Revolution*, p. 160.

and was pastor of a church at Horningsham, in the neighbourhood. I have seen a curious acccount, by a Mr. Butler, of the disbursements to every labourer and for all the materials used in the erection of the meeting-house at Warminster. It cost £487. 2*s.* 7*d.*, which was raised, partly by subscription, and partly by the sale of pews and seats, which became the property of the purchasers, and were often sold and bequeathed accordingly. The communion service of plate was presented to the church, May 2nd, 1790, by Mr. John Langley, a member of the congregation, who also bequeathed £400. in the 4 per cent. annuities, with directions that, out of the Interest, £6. should be paid to the minister, 10*s.* to the clerk, and £9. 10*s.* to the poor. This is the only endowment.

The time of Mr. Buckler's death is uncertain. Mr. South died in 1705, and was succeeded by Mr. Butcher, who was joint pastor till his resignation in 1718, with Mr. Bates, who then became sole pastor. Mr. Bates entered on his duties in the year of Mr. South's death. For many years the society was large. Writing to a friend in 1710, Mr. Bates describes it as consisting of some hundred hearers and a hundred communicants.* Some alteration must have been made in its numbers in the year 1719, when Mr. Nathaniel Butler and a small party seceded in consequence of their dislike to Mr. Bates's preaching, and the unwillingness of the

* Five years afterwards there were four persons in the congregation who were qualified, by their estates, to fill the office of Justice of the Peace.

others to invite a Mr. Pike as joint minister. It is said that the secession was occasioned by a charge of Arianism against Mr. Bates;—but, from a long "representation" in the church-book, signed by 44 members, and dated June 26th, 1719, it appears that there was much misunderstanding on the subject. The following statement is under the fourth head:—

"Whereas 'tis suggested that our minister favours the Arrian notion, as we hear Mr. Butler told the Rev. Mr. Robinson, we can't but all readily declare this to be a vile slander, that he has been very free and full in speaking against y^{t} notion, in private and public, and this Mr. Butler heard but a few days before he went to London with his complaint."

However, the complaining party were determined to have Mr. Pike; "and soon after this, (says Mr. Bates in a note to the above document,) a new meeting-house was built (which is now occupied by the Independent congregation), and great boasts of large supplies from London were made in the hearing of me, Samuel Bates."

Mr. Bates, after having been sole minister many years, was induced to have an assistant. This office was undertaken by Mr. Lush; five years afterwards Mr. Bates died; his colleague became his successor, and remained here until his own death in 1781. Mr. Lush's name occurs in the list of students educated under Dr. Amory at Taunton; he lived to a great age, and though the prevailing recollection of him in the pulpit seems to be that of "a formidable looking person with a large white wig"—he is described as a very amiable

man in private life. The next minister was Mr. Andrews, of whose life I shall be enabled to furnish a short account elsewhere. He was followed by Mr. Thomas Tremlett, who, it is said, was taken from a business in which he was engaged in early life and sent to Oxford. Here, it appears, being unable to subscribe, he became first a commercial traveller, then minister of this congregation, and lastly an accountant in an eminent house in London. The other ministers in my list, of whom distinct biographical notices cannot be given, are Mr. Griffith Roberts, now settled at Boston, in Lincolnshire; Mr. Benjamin Waterhouse, who came from, and removed to America; and Mr. James Bayley, the present minister, who is about to leave and to become pastor of the General Baptist Church at Lutton, near Long Sutton, Lincolnshire.

The congregation continued large many years and has always been respectable. As the number of meeting-houses increased it declined in size, but retained several of the most influential inhabitants of the town. It is probable that Arianism gained ground about the middle of the last century. The last five ministers have professed Unitarian principles, which the whole congregation gradually adopted and now steadily maintain. A Sunday-school, the first in Wiltshire, was formed here soon after the introduction of those invaluable institutions by Mr. Raikes, and still exists. Since the settlement of the present minister a chapel library has been established.

Ministers.

John Buckler	
Compton South	1687—1705.
—— Butcher	1706—1718.
Samuel Bates.....	1705—1761.
William Lush	1756—1781.
Nathanael Andrews	1782—1794.
Thomas Tremlett	1795—1800.
Theophilus Browne	1800—1807.
Griffith Roberts	1808—1825.
Benjamin Waterhouse	1826—1832.
James Bayley	1834

Mr. Buckler, although a tradesman in Warminster, was a member of an ancient and opulent family, whose descendants long enjoyed considerable property in this part of the kingdom. He is the person to whom a letter now in the Harleian collection of MSS. is addressed. It is thus described in the printed catalogues: "Copy of a letter of Mr. Edward Buckler, sent to his brother at Warminster, upon the tidings of the death of his only son, 8 June, 1666."—Harl. 9866. This Edward Buckler was ejected from Calbourn, Hants, and afterwards followed the trade of malting. With regard to the subject of this notice, nothing prevented his doing all in his power to promote the glory of God and the good of mankind. Such men were to be found in almost every Nonconformist congregation at that early period. Regarding the sacred dictates of conscience above every other consideration, they adopted the principles which they believed most scriptural and most favourable to civil and religious liberty. Not contented with cherishing those principles in their own mind, they endeavoured to recommend them to their friends and neighbours; and thus they were of incalculable service to the

cause. The two facts, mentioned in the history of the congregation, that Mr. Buckler was imprisoned for preaching and that a subscription was made on his behalf by his hearers, in the barn, are striking instances of Christian firmness on his part, and of Christian sympathy on theirs. Mr. Buckler was twice married; his second wife was a daughter of Sir Alexander Powell, of Salisbury. He left two sons, John Buckler, Esq., a magistrate, and Mr. Humphrey Buckler, a woolstapler, both members of the Presbyterian congregation at Warminster, and highly useful inhabitants of the town. Mr. Buckler died in his eighty-eighth year.

MR. COMPTON SOUTH is represented by Dr. Calamy as a good scholar and a useful preacher. He was descended from an ancient, genteel family, and educated at the free-school at Salisbury. His first settlement was at Odiham, in Hampshire, where he exercised his ministry about twelve months, and had a numerous auditory. The Act of Uniformity ejected him from the living of Barwick, in Wiltshire, to which he had been presented by the Earl of Pembroke. From his ejectment until the Indulgence in 1672, his life was a constant scene of sufferings, he being seldom free from indictments and presentments in the civil courts. At that period he became the minister of a sober, intelligent, and unanimous people at Ringwood, to which place he went weekly, although eighteen miles distant from his home, and was constantly entertained at Moyles Court, the seat of Lady Lisle—until she was condemned by Judge Jefferies for harbouring Mr. Hicks, a Nonconformist minister. Mr. South does not appear to have been settled in any other place before his removal to Warminster. He was at length obliged, by great weakness, to resign his pastoral charge, and live entirely at his his own house at Upper Dunhead, where he died in 1705.*

NATHANAEL ANDREWS.—A gentleman who was connected with the Warminster congregation many years has furnished

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. ii. p. 497.

me with the following information respecting Mr. Andrews: "I have heard that he was the son of a barber, that he was born at Wincanton, where his parents lived, and that his qualifications were such as to cause him to be sent to an academy at Hackney, after he had received the requisite preparatory education. I believe that he settled at Warminster, as pastor of the Presbyterian congregation there, soon after he finished his studies, and that he left this situation to go to America, where he joined a relative in some commercial pursuit, and at the same time preached to a society at Baltimore. He afterwards became chaplain to an American man-of-war, sent on a voyage of discovery to the Mediterranean; and the vessel being obliged to put in at Portsmouth, Mr. Andrews proceeded to Warminster and preached once more to his old congregation, after an absence of twenty years. It is further said that he returned to Baltimore and died there, after having enjoyed, for some time, a retired allowance as ex-chaplain to the Congress."

Somersetshire.

BRISTOL.

BATH.

ASHWICK.

SHEPTON MALLET.

BRIDGWATER.

TAUNTON.

YEOVIL.

ILMINSTER.

CREWKERNE.

BRISTOL.

"The camp at Clifton was the original town. It was fortified by one of the ancient British princes; and its first name was Caer Godor or Caeroder."

"Godor in Welsh is a chasm, a rupture; in construction it drops the G according to the general rules of the language; and thus is formed *Caer-Odor*, the city of the *chasm;* translated by the Saxons into *Clifton*, that is, the *cliff-town:* and more appropriate names for this fortress it is impossible to devise, standing as it does on the very edge of that prodigious chasm, through which the river Avon seems to force its way."

"Thus was founded a British town on Clifton-hill, the original settlements from which Bristol was derived; and when this latter town began to flourish, and the old hill-fortress to be neglected, it was easy and natural to call the new town, adjoining, by the old name, as happened at Salisbury, Winchester, Colchester, and other places.—It is curious to observe how Clifton, after having transferred its inhabitants to Bristol and continued an unfrequented village for more than 1000 years, is now receiving back its population and re-asserting its claim to eminence."—Seyer.

"After the name of *Caer-Oder* had been dropped, this place came to be called Bristow, partly from another of its ancient names, *Caer Brito*, the British city. But this name had not an immediate derivation from the ancient British. The Saxons, in their rage for changing the name of every place in their possession, gave this a termination from their own language, by adding the word *stow*, a place, to the ancient name *Brito;* hence it was long called *Britstow*, from whence it was latinized into *Bristolia*, or *Bristolium*, and, lastly, derived its present name, Bristol."

"This city has several public edifices of great beauty and importance. [Some of the most striking are devoted to the diffusion of know-

ledge, the administration of justice, and the promotion of commerce.] Here are nineteen churches belonging to the Establishment, besides places of worship appropriate to almost all the various denominations of Dissenters, and a synagogue for the service of the Jews. [The cathedral in College Green has not an imposing exterior. Among the curiosities inside is an emblematic painting of the Triune Deity, being a triangle in a circle, surrounded by cherubs.]"

"Though not, probably, the most ancient, this is certainly one of the most important cities in the empire, and was long reckoned second only to the metropolis, in a commercial and political point of view. The singularity of its situation, on the borders of two extensive counties, in fact standing in both, yet strictly belonging to neither, seated on seven hills, and, in other respects, resembling ancient Rome; surrounded with some of the most delightful scenery that the country can boast, being the great emporium of trade for the western counties, and the share it has had in all the great events of our history, are circumstances that have often excited the interest, and roused the curiosity of the tourist and the annalist."—NIGHTINGALE.

Population in 1811,—81,010; in 1821,—95,758; in 1831,—117,016.

LEWIN'S MEAD CHAPEL.

THE city of Bristol honourably furnished its share of confessors on the memorable Bartholomew Day. Seven of its most learned and useful ministers resigned their livings because they could not conscientiously comply with the terms of the Act of Uniformity. Some remained in the city, and others in the neighbourhood, preaching to small companies of adherents, so long as they could avoid imprisonment and find places in which their prayers might be offered, unheard by the emissaries of Persecution. Besides the ministers who were ejected in Bristol, many others resided there soon after they had quitted their livings. Dr. Calamy especially mentions Mr. Blinman, who had been minister of Chepstow, and Dr. Ichabod Chauncey, the chaplain to a regiment at Dunkirk, and afterwards a physician.* All these ministers contributed to strengthen the cause of Nonconformity in this city, but the honour of forming the first regular congregation is chiefly due to Mr. John Weeks, ejected from Buckland-Newton, in Dorsetshire; Mr. William Troughton, from Salisbury; Mr. Richard Fair-

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. ii. 352.

clough, from Mells, in Somersetshire; and Mr. Samuel Winney, from Glastonbury.

Bristol was noted for the number of its religious sects many years before the Act of Uniformity was passed. In 1645, when the city was taken by the Parliament army, the inhabitants were greatly divided, both on questions of church government and intricate doctrinal points.* Eleven years afterwards, Quakerism having been recently introduced, the unfortunate James Naylor appeared here and excited great attention, especially among the poor and ill-informed. At this time most of the pulpits of the Established Church were filled by Presbyterian ministers, against whom the leaders of the new sect were exceedingly bitter, often producing disturbances in their "steeple houses" while they were conducting public worship.† After the ejectment of so

* To this fact there is curious testimony in a farewell sermon preached by one Samuel Kem, in 1646. This good man acted in the double capacity of major and chaplain to the Parliament garrison at Bristol; and the following remarks, among others, were addressed to the regiment when he left: "It is a sad time, this; but a more sad omen of worser times,—even the *rabble of opinions* in this city of Bristol; of which I may say, that as the sword hath slain many, so hath error many more in a few months' time. One while such a man preacheth truth, and you are willing to pull out your eyes to do him good: a little after you are ready to pull out *his* eyes, and he is a low man and not worthy your presence, and so discouraged. How many wayes do you make to heaven in this place! I beseech you where I am related unto, to look to your guards; keep a strict watch; double your guard; eye your sally ports; and put on the whole armour of God."

† See Mr. Seyer's valuable Memoirs of Bristol, Vol. ii. p. 500. Few modern topographical works equal this in the number and beauty of its engravings, and the interesting nature of its facts. It is enriched by copious extracts from the curious MS. calendars, or chronicles, relating to the history of the city, and preserved by the corporation and a few private individuals. One of these calendars has the following notice: "An heresie arose

many of the "priests," the opposition of the Quakers became less vehement; notwithstanding their fanaticism they were fervent lovers of religious liberty, and it would have been strange, indeed, if they had not reverenced the spirit which led the Nonconformist pastors to brave, as they themselves had done, the frowns of the world. This was an era when all the enemies of spiritual usurpation were required to unite. Many and determined were the opponents of Civil and Religious Freedom, among the corporate body and their partizans in this city. Their zeal against Whigs and Dissenters was at its height during the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion;—the Duke of Beaufort, then Lord Lieutenant, drew up twenty-one companies of foot on Redcliffe Mead, and declared that if the citizens shewed any disposition towards insurrection he would immediately set fire to the town. Monmouth, on hearing this, is reported to have given up his intention of attempting to enter Bristol, saying, "God forbid I should bring fire and sword on so noble a city!" Again, on the accession of George the First, there was a proof of the difficulties which the Dissenters had to encounter in the attachment of the principal

by the people called Quakers, to which many did cleave, and chiefly in the city of Bristol."—Mr. Seyer thus continues: "Beside the Quakers, the leading sects were the Presbyterians, the Anabaptists, and the Independents; and they were in violent hostility to each other. As for the Church of England, it was so intirely subdued, as apparently to be forgotten; it is not even mentioned in any of these fanatic books and pamphlets lately quoted. The Presbyterians had gained the supremacy; most of the churches were occupied by their ministers; theirs was, in fact, the established church."—Seyer's Memoirs, Vol. ii. p. 500.

inhabitants of Bristol to the Tory party, and their disloyalty to the new monarch and his government. "The public rejoicings were interrupted by a high-church rabble, the houses of those who illuminated were furiously assaulted, and their windows broken, with such other demonstrations of zeal as the Sacheverellites of that time, and their successors of later periods, thought requisite for the welfare of the Church and the maintenance of good order."*

* Nightingale's Somersetshire, p. 666. Seyer confirms this account, and shews particularly that the Dissenters were great sufferers. "On the day appointed for the coronation, there were again in this city extraordinary rejoicings, and in the evening an illumination; but the conclusion of the day was deplorable. About six or seven o'clock in the evening, an unruly mob began to assemble, and continued rioting and doing mischief till about midnight, before they could be dispersed. This mob was a Tory mob, and the violence which they committed was, (of course,) as they said, in defence of Church and State, and the objects of their rage were the Whigs and Dissenters. The spirit of party was at that time very violent throughout the kingdom, and in few places more so than in Bristol. The Tories and High-Churchmen were the same party, and some who survived were the same men as the Royalists in the reign of Charles I. and II.: most of these were much dissatisfied with the exclusion of the family of *Stuart* from the throne, and with the succession of the house of Hanover. Their adversaries called them *Jacobites*, as being attached to Prince James; and *Cheverellites*, as friends to the principles of *Cheverell*, as the mob called Dr. Sacheverell; and therefore they did not join, or joined unwillingly, in the rejoicings on the accession of King George. One may venture, at this distance of time, to say that this party contained the most respectable part of the citizens; [Mr. Seyer would probably call the clergy and magistrates who might have stopped the Birmingham Riots, men of the highest respectability;] and it is manifest from what followed, that the populace were of the same party. They began to collect a little before night, and mustered to the number of about five hundred, who testified their ill-humour by breaking the windows of such houses as were illuminated, putting out the bonfires, and crying out, *Down with the Roundheads—God bless Dr. Sacheverell; Sacheverell and O————; d——n all foreigners.* They first attempted Mr. Gough's Presbyterian meeting-house, in Tucker Street, but were here disappointed; they broke the door but did not go in, a woman in the neighbourhood telling them that there were several per-

The founder of the Lewin's Mead congregation was Mr. John Weeks, who had been ejected from Buckland-Newton. He came to Bristol soon after his ejectment, preached as often as he could, and was much persecuted here by the corporate officers and other public men. Twice he was imprisoned six months on account of his Nonconformity, but during his confinement he preached out of the prison windows, and had many of the common people constantly to hear him. His talents and sufferings rendered him so popular, that for many years he was the minister of a congregation of fifteen hundred persons, all of his own gathering.* For some years before his death, which occurred in 1698, he was assisted in his ministerial duties by Mr. Joseph Kentish, whose father and grandfather were ejected ministers, and who received his education in an academy at Wickham Brook, in Suffolk, conducted by Mr. Cradock, another member of the same honourable band.† It does not appear in what place

sons within, armed with muskets to defend it. The first house on which they discharged their fury was Mr. Whiting's, the Under Sheriff, in Temple Street, (*alias* Temple-backs,) with whom they were offended, because he had prosecuted a notorious rogue who had been guilty of perjury. The next was the house of Mr. Jeffery, a distiller, a Dissenter, belonging to the meeting-house above mentioned, whose windows they shattered to pieces; the same they did to a button maker, because they fancied that he made the buttons for the coat in which the pretended Dr. Sacheverell was to be burnt. But their principal object was the house of Mr. Richard Stephens, a baker, in Tucker Street, a man of good property, a Dissenter belonging to the neighbouring meeting-house, one who always distinguished himself in the support of the Whig candidates at elections."—SEYER's Memoirs, Vol. ii. p. 561.

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 445.

† Toulmin's History of Dissenters, p. 240.

the members of Mr. Weeks's congregation assembled during the troublesome times which preceded the Revolution. The earliest authentic memorandum is dated December 26, 1692, and appears at the beginning of the first church-book,—one of the most interesting records I have been allowed to inspect. From this memorandum an opinion may be formed as to the state of the society. It is as follows:

Memorandum.

Bristoll, Decem. 26, 1692.

That ye day above written, [we] being at Election of Officers for ye year Ensuing, twas agreed upon (above 20 of ye Society being present) That Mr. Abra— Elton be Elected Treasurer, Mr. Ambrose West, Mr. Thomas Corp, and Mr. William Stratton, Assistants.

And there being Several debts at that time, it was further agreed that ye two important cases, (viz.)

The affair of ye Meeting House and Mr. Spademan of Rotterdam his affair, be presented first by ye Said Treasurer and Assistants with the greatest Diligence; that ye Treasurer shall Issue out his orders to the Assistants to warn 30 or more of ye most substantial men of ye Society as Occasion Shall offer, upon the aforesaid affair or any other important affair; and that if Sixteen or more beside the Treasurer doth appear, that the Majority of them shall determine the aforesaid affair.

JOHN WEEKS [Minister],
[and many of the members.]

ABRAHAM ELTON, Treasr.,
[and the three Assistants].

Hence we may infer that the first house of prayer in Lewin's Mead was then about to be erect-

ed. The inference is strengthened by the third memorandum in the church-book, dated August 25, 1693. By a meeting then held, six persons were empowered "to consider a plan for raising the money for building a meeting-house." Neither on this point, nor on the time when the undertaking was completed, have we any information; but there was certainly no needless delay. With regard "to Mr. Spademan of Rotterdam his affair," that gentleman, who had been ejected from a living in Lincolnshire, and subsequently resided in Holland, returned to England soon after the Revolution, and proposed to open an academy in or near Bristol.* Agreeably to the above memorandum, the Treasurer warned thirty or more of the most substantial men of the society. A meeting was held January 20, 1693, and each person present subscribed towards encouraging the plan. But as far as Bristol was concerned, it was relinquished; Mr. Spademan went to London, accepted an invitation to be co-pastor with Mr. John Howe, and afterwards opened an academy in Hoxton Square, in conjunction with two other divines, Mr. Lorimer and Dr. Oldfield. The Lewin's Mead records, for nearly half a century from this time, relate almost entirely to the appointment of the Treasurer, his assistants, and other officers, which was attended to with great regularity and unanimity at the close of every year. In 1708, sixteen persons were elected as deacons "to assist

* Wilson's History of Dissenting Churches, Vol. iii. p. 42.

at the administration of the Lord's Supper, several persons who formerly filled the office being deceased;" and this custom has been observed to the present day. In 1718, a committee was first appointed "to assist the Treasurer, and to meet once a month or oftener, to consider of every thing that may be for the good of the society"—another useful plan still regularly acted upon.

The succession of ministers at Lewin's Mead is traced with much ease and accuracy. I have stated that Mr. Weeks gathered the congregation and was assisted, during the close of his life, by Mr. Kentish. On the death of the pastor the assistant became the successor, and remained in that office until his own death in 1705. When Mr. Kentish was promoted, the congregation invited Mr. Michael Pope to assist him; but he declining the invitation, they chose Mr. Strickland Gough. On Mr. Kentish's death they again applied to Mr. Pope, and prevailed upon him to leave London and settle with them as their pastor. This arrangement was not complimentary to Mr. Gough; and three years afterwards there was, for a short time, a slight want of unanimity which terminated in the retirement, or rather dismissal, of Mr. Gough. First the question was mooted whether it was desirable to continue Mr. Pope in the office of pastor, which being carried in the affirmative, it was proposed at the next meeting that, "for several weighty reasons," Mr. Gough should cease to be the assistant, which was carried

by a majority of 44 to 12.* From this time Mr. Pope seems to have been sole minister till his death in 1718. Then we find the names of Samuel Bury as the pastor, and John Diaper as the assistant. There are but few notices of the life of Mr. Pope. His family were persons of considerable influence in the city, and the names of several of its members occur frequently in the records of the society. During his ministry the congregation continued large, increased in opulence, and were distinguished for Christian zeal and integrity. It is worthy of remark, that at this early period, and even still farther back, there is not the slightest proof that the ministers and people at Lewin's Mead ever professed the opinions and adopted the practices now called orthodox. If such had been the case, it is natural to suppose there would have been traces of it in the correspondence (copied into the records) between the society and their spiritual teachers preparatory to the settlement of the latter. Of these documents the following letter is a fair specimen:

September the 7th, 1705. } Att a general meeting of the Society (the whole being summoned), Mr. Michael Pope's acceptance of the within call was read, and is as followeth:—

GENTLEMEN,

I have considered the import of your kind letter, and upon due thought am purswaded 'tis my duty not to delay in my de-

* From the preceding allusion to Mr. Gough, (see extract from Seyer, p. 102,) it appears that he became the minister of the Tucker Street congregation after he left Lewin's Mead.

termination as to my acceptance. I do therefore, after due thanks to the society for your kind invitation, upon (I hope) due apprehension of the Great concern of a Pastoral charge, and [your] readiness to assist and encourage me in the discharge of so solemn and weighty a concern, accept of your kind offer and shall accordingly endeavour to be with you as soon as I can: I must be allowed some time to take my leave here of Persons to whom I am so very much obliged; it cannot but be expected that I should move leasurely—that due provision may be made for the several places to which I am related. I design (God willing) to be with you the latter end of the month, and shall dispose of my affaires accordingly. I beg your prayors, and beg for you that the Grace of our Lord Jesus may be with your spirits, whose I am and for whose sake I shall endeavour to serve you as the minister of our common Lord, as becomes

Your humble servant,

MICHAEL POPE.

London, September 4, 1705.

This letter, written a hundred and thirty years ago, contains nothing that might not be written by an Unitarian minister of the present day. The same may be said of another letter which I shall introduce as a faithful token of the earnestness as well as the sentiments of many of the Presbyterian ministers of that time. It is entitled "The dying Pastor's last legacy to his flock: being the farewell letter of the Rev. Mr. Samuel Bury; a late eminent preacher of God's Word, to a Dissenting congregation in Lewin's Mead, Bristol. Written a little before his death, which happened on March 10, 1730."*

* Prot. Diss. Mag., Vol. i. p. 248.

Most loving, and dearly beloved flock,

Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, I would not but leave you this last testimonial of my sincere love to you. How much soever I have failed in my duty to any of you, yet God is my witness, that I sincerely love you all, and that I never appeared in the mount before him in secret, but I had you all on my breast, and in my heart there. I am now to serve you no more in my former station. I blush to think I have served you no better, but am glad I have served you at all; for, thanks be to God, I have a comfortable list of many sincere converts among you, as in many other places, who are effectually brought home to Christ, and can boldly call me their spiritual pastor and father, who shall be my joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus' appearance to judgment.

I have made it my business to preach unto you, and press upon you, the substantial doctrines and duties of religion; and what I was fully assured was well grounded upon holy Scripture. I was always afraid of apocryphal sins and duties; I mean of charging any thing upon you, as sin or duty, for which I had no scriptural but imaginary proof or warrant; and I bless God I have made it a considerable part of my life to get ready for death, and have now finished the work which God gave me to do. I have been employed in the Lord's vineyard, and borne the heat of the day, and continued in his work, blessed be his name, till evening; and can now comfortably look into another world, in hope of the reward of eternal life, which God hath promised; nor is it any terror to me to meet death, and appear before the awful bar of God; while I can keep a steadfast eye upon my prevailing advocate and intercessor in heaven. I hope I can in some measure say, with the blessed apostle St. Paul, "for me to die is gain; and that I have a desire to depart hence and to be with Christ, which is best of all: and that I have fought a good fight, and finished my course, and kept the faith, and henceforth I hope there is a crown of righteousness laid up for me; and not for me only, but for all them that love his appearing."

I have been solemnly devoted and ordained to the ministry,

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I have been solemnly devoted and ordained to the ministry,

and I bless God I have taken much pleasure and satisfaction in it, especially when I have been any ways acceptable to the people. I never was prostituted to any party, but have endeavoured to serve God as a *Catholic Christian;* I could not conform to the present establishment of the Church of England, because of difficulties which, upon the most impartial study, have appeared to me as insuperable. Nor could I ever be reconciled to the temper and interest of unpeaceable Dissenters, who would censure or unchurch all men that were not of their way. I have loved a Conformist as heartily as a Nonconformist, when both have been so for conscience' sake; and when the power of godliness hath equally appeared in both, they have equally shared in my sincere love and affection.—I am now within sight of the world of life, light, and peace, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, circumcision nor uncircumcision, but Christ is all in all; yet before I can leave the world, I must take my solemn farewell of you all, my beloved flock and people. I am now never to speak to you any more from the pulpit, nor must you ever see my face again till the vast appearance at the great day of judgment. Suffer me, therefore, I beseech you, solemnly to obtest and conjure you all, as your dying pastor, and one that must meet you ere long at the Lord's bar, and stand as a witness for you or against you then,—that you do not compliment God and your precious souls, but make religion your main business and work of your lives, in defiance of all the avocations and circumstances of this world. Whatever becomes of your shop and compter, be sure you mind your closet: secure to yourselves an interest in Christ without any delay, by accepting the gospel offer, and rest yourselves upon him for righteousness and eternal life. Never trust to your own hearts, in matters of salvation, without an impartial trial, and that every day. Let the work of self-examination be carried on by you; "examine and prove yourselves in order to know yourselves, whether you are in the faith;" whether your evidences for heaven be sound and of the right kind; whether your title is clear for a better world; and do not suffer any strangeness betwixt God and your own souls, or the least blot on your evidences for eternal

life. That you may keep up your communion with God, clear up your union with Christ, which is the ground of your communion; and see that you shew a just, inviolable respect to both the tables of God's law. In all your religious and secular concerns, keep conscience void of offence both toward God and man, and let every day's practice be the mending of the last day's errors. Make conscience of relative duties towards each other, and set up family instruction in your houses, and make the world truckle to your daily acts of divine worship. Diligently observe yourselves and families to keep from the infection of evil company, that would lead you to drink and game, or to haunt the play-house; which, as Archbishop *Tillotson* calls it, is the Devil's Chapel; a school and nursery of lewdness and vice.—Be not ashamed of godliness and true religion, though others reproach you on that account; it being much easier to bear man's censure than God's anger and displeasure. —Have a special regard to the due sanctification of the sabbath-day, both in your assemblies, families, and closet. Also give diligent attendance on all the ordinances of religion, whether stated or occasional.—Keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace and love, and shew yourselves exemplary unto others, for Christian temper and moderation. Adorn the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ in all things, and let your light shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may be induced by your good example to glorify God also.

And now, my beloved friends and brethren in Christ Jesus, I leave you, and humbly commit you all to the care and conduct of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and to the word of his grace, and to the direction and guidance of his good spirit, which is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, and to build you up and give you an inheritance among them who are sanctified; and am your affectionate and ever-loving, and now dying pastor,

SAMUEL BURY.

The Lord be with your spirits and mine.

Amen and Amen.

This excellent man was educated at Islington, in Mr. Doolittle's academy. The catholic sentiments expressed in his letter are the more honourable to him, because in early life he witnessed much sectarian strife. His tutor was obliged by the prevailing spirit of intolerance to remove, first from Islington to Battersea, and soon after to place his pupils with private families at Clapham. In this seminary Mr. Bury was contemporary with Mr. Matthew Henry, of whom he once said, while delineating his character, "he was to me a most desirable friend and I love Heaven better since he went there."* Mr. Bury first settled at Bury St. Edmunds. He preached and afterwards published two sermons on the opening of the Presbyterian chapel at Bury, December 11, 1711; and his portrait still remains in the vestry of that building. He published a few other single sermons, and the life of his wife, a lady of eminent piety and benevolence.

The successor of Mr. Bury at Lewin's Mead was Mr. Diaper, during whose ministry large additions were made to the congregation. In the record of the proceedings of the year 1736 we find the name of Sir Michael Foster, who for some time worshiped at Lewin's Mead.† The committee met regularly to arrange the affairs of the society. At their suggestion, in 1748, a lecture which had been delivered on Wednesday evening was afterwards delivered during the winter months in the morning. It had

* Tong's Life of Matthew Henry, p. 27.

† The life of this great lawyer and upright judge was published in 1811, by his nephew Mr. Dodson.

been also customary for the pastor to preach a Preparation Sermon on the Friday evening preceding the day for the administration of the Lord's supper; this also was altered to the morning. But the most interesting minute in this period of our history relates to the improvement of the singing. The congregation, in common with others, had been accustomed until the middle of the last century to sing without books at the dictation of the clerk, who gave out the lines singly. In 1758 a committee, consisting of John Hall, Jeremiah Ames, and others, met and passed resolutions in favour of the introduction of such a hymn book as the ministers should approve of, and the gratuitous distribution of copies among boys, servants and poor people. They also resolved, with a further view to the improvement of the singing, that requests should be made to the ministers for suitable sermons on the subject,—to the clerk for his attendance in the vestry twice a week to teach those who were desirous of learning—and to the female part of the congregation for their especial assistance on the Lord's-day, in this part of public worship.

This plan was immediately carried into effect. The pastor was Mr. William Richards. His predecessor, Mr. Diaper, whose assistant he had been, resigned in 1751, on account of infirmities. Mr. Diaper was but little known beyond the circle of his congregation, but that circle he brightened by his beautiful example and labours of love. The society were warmly attached to him, as indeed

they have been to all their ministers, proving the sincerity of their regard by friendly and delicate proceedings in reference to every official change, and by manifesting a warm interest in the progress of truth and virtue. The life of Mr. Richards was equally devoid of incidents of general interest. Where he was educated, or whether he published any thing, I have not been able to ascertain. He was chosen assistant in 1731, and pastor in 1751; and his letter of resignation is dated December 26, 1768. While alluding to the bodily indisposition which led to this event, he also bears testimony to the worth of the Lewin's Mead Society. "It is necessary," he says, "during the small remainder of my life to desire the relief of ease and freedom from the constant returns of public labour. I cannot, therefore, longer postpone declaring my resignation of the pastoral relation to this reputable and to me highly endeared society. I cannot but reflect with gratitude and pleasure, that the providence of God assigned me the sphere of my service among a people with whom I have enjoyed so long and uninterrupted satisfaction, for whom I always have had, and ever shall retain, a most cordial affection and esteem."

On the appointment of Mr. Richards to the office of pastor, Mr. Thomas Wright was chosen his assistant. After the retirement of Mr. Richards, the congregation were supplied by various ministers in conjunction with Mr. Wright, until Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Estlin became his permanent assistant.

Thus connected, these gentlemen laboured together, with much success, twenty-one years, when, at the earnest request of Mr. Wright, Dr. Estlin was appointed joint pastor. Five years afterwards, Mr. Wright died, and the vacancy was filled by the election of Mr. John Rowe to the same office. In 1817, Dr. Estlin died and was succeeded by Dr. Carpenter, who had been many years one of the ministers of George's Meeting, Exeter; and in 1832, another change took place in consequence of the removal of Mr. Rowe, on which occasion the society chose Mr. R. B. Aspland, of Chester, son of the Rev. R. Aspland, of Hackney. Of Dr. Estlin and Mr. Rowe biographical notices will be found in the usual place. With regard to the present ministers, their names and their labours are too well known, and too highly esteemed, to need further notice here. One circumstance, however, may be mentioned as closely connected with my object. When Dr. Carpenter had resided at Bristol about ten years, his health became so much impaired that he deemed it right to tender the resignation of his pastoral office. This, his attached congregation were unwilling to accept, and finding it probable that a complete change of air and scene and a protracted cessation from his usual engagements would, under the Divine blessing, be followed by a renewed capacity for exertion, they urged him to continue their minister. At length Dr. Carpenter consented; in the month of August 1828, he addressed a letter (afterwards lithographed) to the society, stating the

reasons by which he was influenced, and manifesting the same affectionate spirit, the same earnest desire for the Christian improvement of his hearers, as the reader has perceived in the letter of his predecessor Mr. Bury.

The history of the congregation during the last half-century includes the erection of the present chapel. The old building was originally held upon a lease which expired about the middle of the last century, when arrangements were made for placing the property on a more satisfactory footing. The meeting-house, the ground on which it stood, and several old buildings adjoining, were at length purchased by the society; and, prior to the year 1790, the present handsome chapel was erected on the same site. While the work was going on, the congregation assembled on one part of the Sunday in the Independent chapel, in Bridge Street, it being then customary for the Dissenters of Bristol, though differing widely on points of doctrine, to accommodate each other in the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind. Many years afterwards the Lewin's Mead society, acting in the same spirit, lent their place of worship for several weeks to another Independent congregation meeting in Castle Green; —but when, more recently, the Unitarians applied for the loan of the Castle Green chapel in return, the accommodation was denied;—many of the "orthodox" worshipers would have consented, but the minister pronounced his veto and he was suffered to prevail.

The situation of the Lewin's Mead chapel is well known to be bad. The building, however, is in every respect worthy of the large and respectable society assembling within its walls. It has three aisles and three galleries, and is capable of seating about 1000 persons.* The pulpit and desk are particularly neat. In the gallery, opposite, is an organ. A new and useful collection of hymns, made by Dr. Carpenter and others for the use of the society, and since adopted by other societies, was introduced in 1831. It may be here mentioned, that Dr. Estlin at one period of his ministry wished a liturgy to be used at Lewin's Mead. The subject was discussed, but the congregation not being unanimous, the old plan was continued. Divine service is conducted in the morning and evening. The number of worshipers is about six hundred, exclusive of several hundred scholars.

Many changes have taken place during the last twenty years. A large number of heads of families and not a few promising young persons have been removed by death. There have also been secessions in consequence of doctrinal changes. Considerable interest was excited by the sudden alteration in the opinions of Dr. Stock, about the year 1817. That gentleman, after having long proved himself a zealous member of the Unitarian congregation, became, in the course of a few weeks, a Calvinistic Baptist. Many years afterwards, the

* The galleries are ascended by two geometrical staircases rising from the wings of the building.

public were presented with the "Second Thoughts" of Mr. C. A. Elton, a gentleman of considerable literary reputation, who went back to the Established Church, from which he had seceded. He is the son of the Rev. Sir A. Elton, Bart., and the lineal descendant of the first treasurer at Lewin's Mead. He joined the Unitarians about the time of Dr. Stock's secession, and published several powerful defences of the sect every where spoken against,—especially "Unitarianism Unassailable," and "An Appeal to Scripture and Tradition." If, however, the congregation have suffered losses, they have also received many valuable additions. In 1822, the Rev. S. C. Fripp, a clergyman of the Established Church, avowed his conversion to Unitarianism in the Lewin's Mead pulpit, after an examination of nearly four years; and there have been other instances of the same kind. Within the last few years many persons have joined the society from the middle and lower ranks of life. This may be attributed, under Providence, to various circumstances—particularly to a strain of truly evangelical preaching, the well conducted schools attached to the chapel, and the occasional meetings for the cultivation of social and religious feelings. These meetings have greatly increased in number and interest. In addition to the useful intercourse occasioned by the schools, the Book Society, the general congregational affairs, and the Western Unitarian Society, whose committee reside in Bristol, much good has been done by annual tea-meetings. The first was

held five years since, on Good Friday, and was attended chiefly by the teachers and managers of the schools. They have since been held on the same day on a larger plan; each has been more numerously attended than the last, and all have been productive of pleasure and improvement. The congregation, of both sexes and of all ages and classes, now assemble to the number of 250, at five o'clock in the afternoon, and after taking tea in the school-rooms, listen to addresses on subjects of importance to them as members of a congregation, Unitarian Christians, and friends to the universal diffusion of knowledge and happiness.

Besides commodious vestries attached to the chapel, the congregation possess other eligible buildings on the same spot. When the chapel was built, stables and coach-houses were provided for the accommodation of the worshipers. Over the stables is a lecture room, built in 1818, for the purposes of religious instruction to the younger members of the congregation; here the Intermediate School is taught and the chapel library kept. In the month of January, 1826, the latest buildings were completed. These afford a strong proof of the zeal and generosity of the Bristol Unitarians. They consist of two large school-rooms, a committee-room, and a kitchen, together with a small tenement for the master and mistress of the Infant School, and the mistress of the Girls' daily school. In addition to this property, there are at Brunswick Square a burial-ground, and a small building in

which the funeral service is conducted; and at Stoke's Croft an alms-house for 12 poor persons, and school buildings for the daily instruction and partial board of thirty-six boys.

The institutions concerning which I shall state a few facts, may be noticed in the following order:—

I. The Stoke's Croft Alms-house.
II. The Stoke's Croft School.
III. The Girls' Daily Schools.
IV. The Sunday-schools.
V. The Infant and Intermediate Schools.*

Besides these there are—the Fund for the Relief of Poor Ministers or their Widows, the Reading Society, the Fellowship Fund, and the Chapel Library,—all well supported and of great utility. Perceiving the necessity of concentrating their efforts as much as possible, the congregation have lately established a fund, called the Lewin's Mead Auxiliary Fund. There will consequently be no longer distinct subscriptions to the Chapel Library and Fellowship Fund. The leading objects of the new society are, to assist other congregations, to contribute towards York College and the Unitarian Association, to maintain and extend the Congregational Library, and to distribute tracts calculated to make Unitarian principles better known and promote their practical influence.

* The information given under these heads is chiefly derived from an interesting statement printed by the congregation, in 1833.

I. *The Stoke's Croft Alms-house.*

This charity, together with the school conducted in the same buildings, was founded in the early part of the last century. At its commencement the congregation subscribed £4000 for the erection of the building and the support of the institution. This fund was further aided at subsequent periods, by benefactions and legacies, all which were vested in public securities. But as the income of the charity did not increase with its exigencies, at the beginning of the present century an appeal was made to the congregation on its behalf, which was liberally answered. At the same time it was resolved, that the fund should be further increased, by congregational collections and annual subscriptions for the benefit of the school,—a resolution which has been acted upon to the present time. The alms-house is comfortable, and is occupied by eleven women and one man, for each of whom there is an allowance from the funded property.

II. *The Stoke's Croft School.*

For a long time from the establishment of this institution, 30 boys were instructed and wholly supported by it. The number boarded in the house was gradually lessened, till, on the appointment of the present master in 1832, that part of the system was entirely relinquished, and the advantages of the school limited to instruction, with clothing and dinners on Sundays. At the close of 1832, six boys were added to the school, but with fewer advantages than the others in consequence of the state of the funds. The general objects of instruction are, reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography, together with the essentials of English grammar. Attention is paid to the exercise of the intellectual powers, and the boys are made familiar with the facts of scripture history, the duties of life, and the principles and precepts of religion. In these objects the master, who re-

sides in the house, is aided by the ministers of the congregation, and the school is frequently visited by them and the other feoffees. Prayers and portions of scripture are read by the master every morning and evening, when several of the persons in the almshouse usually attend. On Sundays, also, the scholars are occupied in suitable employments. All the arrangements tend to prepare the boys for the useful occupations of life; and various instances have occurred, in which they have been enabled by its training to raise themselves into creditable situations. They are not admitted till they are nine years of age, nor continued more than four years. When they leave, provision is made for continuing their religious instruction.

III. *The Girls' Daily School.*

This school was commenced in 1787. Twenty-one girls are taught, and have clothing and Sunday dinners. The expenses are defrayed out of funded property, aided by the annual subscriptions and the biennial collection. The following rules and principles are selected from a paper published in 1825. They are connected with the history of the congregation, and may furnish a useful guide to the promoters of similar institutions.

It was the intention of those who founded this School, that the children should be chosen, in the first instance, from suitable families connected with the Lewin's Mead Congregation. And it was their particular desire, that the characters of the parents or guardians of the children recommended should be attended to, in order that the endeavours used in the School to form habits of piety, industry, neatness, &c., might be encouraged and promoted at home.

The girls are required to attend regularly and punctually, from nine till twelve in the morning, and from two till four or five in the afternoon. On the Lord's-day they form part of the Sunday-school. "They must appear with their clothes clean and properly mended; their faces, necks, and hands washed;

their hair combed and cut short. They must never be kept from school on trifling pretences, nor without leave of the Mistress. The elder ones are instructed in household work and washing; and during the last two years in writing and arithmetic. No girl is admitted before she is nine years of age, or continues after she is fourteen; if on quitting the school she obtain a place of service, remain in it for six months, and receive a good character from her mistress, one guinea is laid out for her in clothes. Young ladies of the congregation, not being subscribers, are invited to become Visiters of the School, and to attend the Quarterly Meetings of the Subscribers, when scholars are elected and Visiters appointed.—The proper visiting of the School is, in various ways, an object of great moment, and encourages among the girls a disposition to propriety of demeanour and regard to character."

IV. *The Sunday-Schools.*

These were established in 1821. They are taught in the new buildings, and supported by donations from individuals and grants from the fund of the Lewin's Mead United Schools. Connected with this institution is a School Library. About ninety books and tracts are lent every Sunday. The following extract from a speech by Dr. Carpenter, in the year 1834, supplies interesting information as to the origin and objects of the Lewin's Mead Sunday-schools: "The school at our meeting at Exeter was the first in that place. At Bristol we had to wait. There are times when we must watch and wait for years. Our friends thought that the children would not be allowed to come. In the meantime, in the spring of 1818, two Persians of eminence, who were in this country, visited us. They wanted to know if we had a Sunday-school, and said they thought we were not so active as we ought to be. It was of no use to tell them of Birmingham. We could not speak of one Sunday-school in London, or of one in Bristol. These inquiries, however, enabled us to stir up our friends; and we are now felt by

the poor around us to be their benefactors. Prejudice and parochial influence have been active against us; but this should stimulate our zeal. Whose zeal is not stimulated by being told we are not Christians? Our proper answer to this reproach is, to rouse a spirit of exertion; not in behalf of foreign missions—we should not throw away our strength upon those; but a spirit of exertion at home. My friends, teach Christianity, not controversially, but simply; that is the best way of teaching it. If the children inquire farther, teach them, as matter of fact, that such opinions are held, and lead them to think for themselves. Teach them never to turn away from holiness and love. Teach them in this manner, and then, though they should leave us, they will not be bitter against us. Shew them that our belief is not a mere skeleton, but that we have the vital power of religion." *

V. *The Infant and Intermediate Daily Schools.*

The former was commenced in 1826, and the latter in 1829. Both are supported by the fund of the United Schools. The Infant School contains from eighty to ninety children, who are taught in one of the rooms in the new buildings. The Intermediate School contains about the same number, and is instructed in the lecture room, on another part of the premises. Besides the provision for moral and mental culture in these institutions, they have a dispensary, established exclusively for the Lewin's Mead Schools. It appears by the medical report for 1832, that 106 cases had been attended to and relieved in the course of the year. In consequence of the great attention then paid to the health of the children, the cholera, which proved so fatal in some parts of the city, did not afflict one of the Lewin's Mead scholars. "Advantage has been taken (says the report) during the past year, of the permission given by the Committee to extend the benefit of this dispensary. The full advantage of the permission has yet been limited, lest the funds should be

* See Report of the meeting of the Sunday-school Association held in London, *General Baptist Advocate*, Vol. iv. p. 105.

inadequate to meet the necessarily increased expenditure. Application for advice has been constantly made by various members of families, of which the younger branches are attached to the Schools. Thus, in many instances, it is hoped that serious illness has been averted, since no delay has arisen from the frequent difficulty of procuring recommendations to other charities."

The length to which I have protracted this account precludes my giving further particulars of the minor institutions connected with the society. For the same reason I cannot enter into the details of those admirable systems of management, both moral and pecuniary, by which at the same time each school is distinctly provided for, and all are under an efficient superintendence. Enough has been recorded to enable the reader to reflect with pleasure upon the efforts of the Bristol Unitarians; and while he turns his thoughts to Lewin's Mead, where the opulent are giving of their abundance, the aged and well-informed guiding by their judgment, and the young devoting their energies to deeds of goodness, he may derive abundant encouragement to do what his hands find him to do, with all his might.

The following inscriptions are found on suitable tablets in the small building in the cemetery in Brunswick Square:

NEAR THIS STONE
ARE DEPOSITED THE REMAINS
OF THE REVEREND THOMAS WRIGHT,
WHO SUSTAINED WITH DIGNITY THE CHARACTER OF MINISTER
OF THE SOCIETY OF PROTESTANT DISSENTERS IN LEWIN'S

MEAD DURING THE SPACE OF FORTY-EIGHT YEARS.
HE DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE 14th OF MAY, 1797,
IN THE SEVENTY-FIRST YEAR OF HIS AGE.
BY A MANLY AVOWAL OF THE GENUINE PRINCIPLES
OF RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTY:
BY AN ARDENT AND WELL-DIRECTED ZEAL TO PROMOTE
THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE PRACTICE OF PURE CHRISTIANITY:
AND PARTICULARLY BY A LIFE OF STRICT INTEGRITY,
HE ACQUIRED GENERAL RESPECT, AND SECURED TO HIMSELF THE
TESTIMONY OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE, AND THE WELL-GROUNDED
HOPE OF A HAPPY IMMORTALITY.
HIS PUBLIC SERVICES, IN WHICH PIETY,
AFFECTION, AND JUDGMENT, WERE UNITED,
WERE HAPPILY CONTINUED TO THE PERIOD OF HIS DISSOLUTION.

"BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT WHOM HIS LORD
WHEN HE COMETH SHALL FIND SO DOING."

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
THE REV. JOHN PRIOR ESTLIN, L. L. D.,
MINISTER OF LEWIN'S MEAD CHAPEL
FOR FORTY-SIX YEARS,
WHO, BELOVED AND REGRETTED, DIED
AUGUST 10TH, 1817, AGED 70 YEARS.
HIS WRITINGS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY AN ENLIGHTENED ZEAL FOR
THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL, AS HIS LIFE WAS BY BENEVOLENCE,
INTEGRITY, SIMPLICITY, AND CHEERFUL PIETY; AND HIS
DEPARTURE WAS ILLUMINED BY THE JOYFUL EXPECTATION OF A
RESURRECTION TO ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

"BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD."

ALSO OF JOHN WRIGHT, M. D.,
WHO, FROM AN INCAPACITY THROUGH A FAILURE OF VOICE
TO DISCHARGE THE DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY,
IN WHICH HE DELIGHTED, ENGAGED IN THE
MEDICAL PROFESSION, AND ACTUATED BY THE SAME
PRINCIPLES OF PIETY AND BENEVOLENCE, CLOSED A LIFE OF

VARIED USEFULNESS IN THE PLEASING HOPE OF IMMORTALITY,
23rd DECEMBER, 1794, ÆT. 62.

"MARK THE PERFECT MAN, AND BEHOLD THE UPRIGHT:
FOR THE END OF THAT MAN IS PEACE."

PSALM XXXVII. 37.

Ministers.

JOHN WEEKS	1662—1698.
JOSEPH KENTISH	1698—1705.
STRICKLAND GOUGH	1698—1708.
MICHAEL POPE	1705—1718.
SAMUEL BURY	1718—1730.
JOHN DIAPER	1718—1751.
WILLIAM RICHARDS	1730—1768.
THOMAS WRIGHT	1751—1797.
JOHN PRIOR ESTLIN, LL.D.	1770—1817.
JOHN ROWE.....	1797—1832.
LANT CARPENTER, LL.D.	1817.
ROBERT BROOK ASPLAND, M.A.	1832.

JOHN PRIOR ESTLIN was born at Hinckley, in Leicestershire, April 9th, 1747. He received his school education under the auspices of his maternal uncle, the Rev. John Prior, Vicar of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and his earliest views in life seemed to be directed to the Church of England, towards which and its religious services, notwithstanding the wide difference with regard to doctrinal points in the sentiments he afterwards entertained, he always felt a certain degree of affection. From

school he was, however, in 1764, sent by his father to the Academy at Warrington; and the course of studies he there went through, determined his choice towards a different persuasion. The Divinity chair of this seminary was then filled by the Rev. Dr. Aikin, for whose character he felt the highest respect, and whose sentiments in morals and religion he for the most part adopted. Having finished his academical course, he was invited by the congregation of Lewin's Mead, as colleague to Mr. Wright. With this society, a numerous, respectable, and affectionate one, he continued till those who had sat as children under his early ministry, had themselves become heads of families; and he often spoke with much feeling of the numerous friends he had followed to the grave, always adding with energy, that he should ever bless God for the circumstance, that he had not known an instance of a person who regularly attended the worship of God in that place, who had not hope in his death, and of whom *he* had not the brightest hopes. In his funeral sermon on the death of his co-pastor, in 1797, he says, "Two hundred times have I been called to the discharge of a similar melancholy duty." Soon after settling at Bristol, Dr. Estlin opened a school, which became a very flourishing one; many of his pupils did credit to themselves and to their tutor, by the proficiency in classical learning which they afterwards exhibited in the Universities, or other stations in life. He treated his pupils with great liberality; and their sense of the happy hours they had spent under his tuition was expressed by an annual meeting held on his birth-day, at which he was always a delighted and delighting guest. At one of these meetings they presented him with the degree of Doctor of Laws, which they had procured for him, without his knowledge, from the University of Glasgow. It was usual with Dr. Estlin, on these occasions, to address his former pupils in a short speech; and that which he delivered on his last birth-day, when he completed his seventieth year, was peculiarly impressive. His school and congregation did not, however, so engage his active mind as to prevent his giving to the world several publications

relative to those topics of religion and morals which were the favourite subjects of his investigation. They testify that he approved himself the watchful defender of the truths he professed to teach, and that the powers of his mind were engaged with sincerity and fervour in the duties of his profession. His style was elegant, clear and flowing—rather turned to pathos than to dry argumentation; his delivery in the pulpit animated, solemn, and affectionate. He was fond of preaching, and never spared himself when any occasion called him forth.

Dr. Estlin's religious opinions were what are called Unitarian, though, with his usual candour, he thought it wrong to restrict that term to those who hold the simple humanity of Christ. He always invited discussion, and though in the confidence of a sanguine disposition, (perhaps the best disposition for happiness,) he made no doubt of the prevalence of the opinions he held, and *that* in a very short time, over the whole Christian world, he always shewed the utmost candour to those of a different persuasion; the fervour of his religious feelings never led him to bigotry, nor his liberality to scepticism. He approved of forms of prayer, and published in 1814 a volume of such forms, great part of which is taken from the Liturgy of the Church of England. He also embraced with great ardour the doctrine of Universal Restitution; led to it as well by the benevolent tendencies of his own mind, as by the earnest and reiterated arguments of a dear and beloved friend.

The leading characteristics of Dr. Estlin were an amiable frankness and simplicity, with a kind and sociable disposition, which made him, even when years pressed upon him, always acceptable in the society of the young and active. He never refused his purse to any claim of distress or useful project to which subscriptions were solicited; and the money he thus disbursed amounted to no inconsiderable portion of his income. In the domestic circle, his kindness, his candour, his hospitality, his cheerful piety, the writer of this memoir has often experienced. Though fond of his children, he was not apt to indulge that anxiety which saddens the domestic circle, and

perhaps often defeats its own purposes; he lived to see his family grown up, and some of them settled in respectable professions. For some years past Dr. Estlin had experienced a decay of sight, and he had often said that after threescore and ten a preacher ought to be *emeritus*. He therefore resigned his situation at Lewin's Mead, and preached his farewell sermon, June 22, 1817. The congregation shewed their regard for him in various ways, particularly by presenting him with a handsome sum of money upon his retiring from the ministry. Being thus exonerated from all professional duty, having also given up his school, he went for the summer to Southerndown, in Glamorganshire, a retired place by the sea-side, where he had usually spent his vacations, and where he had amused himself by building a cottage. His health seemed to be declining, yet there appeared nothing immediately alarming. On Sunday, the 10th of August, he performed the morning and afternoon services to his family and a few neighbours assembled in his house: the subject of his sermon was the resurrection. Retiring soon after into his chamber, he was seized with a sudden effusion of blood from his lungs; the affectionate partner of his life ran to him: he grew faint, leaned his head upon her bosom, and without a sigh expired. His remains were conveyed to Bristol, and interred in the burying-ground belonging to Lewin's Mead Chapel. They were followed to the grave by more than one hundred and twenty gentlemen on foot, and many carriages. The burial service was performed by Dr. Carpenter, and on the next Sunday a consolatory sermon was preached by his old friend Mr. Manning, of Exeter. The chapel was hung with black, and the whole congregation put on mourning. Dr. Estlin was twice married, and left six children.

The above sketch is chiefly in the words of a memoir in the Monthly Repository,* with the initials of Mrs. Barbauld. Another memoir, containing a few more particulars, apparently from the same elegant pen, is prefixed to Dr. Estlin's Lectures

* Vol. xii. p. 573.

on Moral Philosophy. In either may be seen a list of Dr. Estlin's works, twelve in number, in defence of his sound and rational views of Morals and Theology.

Mr. JOHN ROWE was descended from ancestors in good worldly condition, and celebrated, through several generations, as firm and zealous Nonconformists. He was the sixth child of William Rowe, Esq., of Spencecomb, near Crediton, and was born on the 17th of April, 1764. His father and mother were both Dissenters of the English Presbyterian denomination; the former he lost at an early period of his life, but this misfortune was alleviated by the affectionate care of his amiable and judicious mother. It is no small proof of the wisdom of his parents that, perceiving in him an inclination for the Christian ministry, they placed him early in the classical school of the Rev. Joseph Bretland. Here he remained longer than the usual period, profiting by the instructions of his highly respected preceptor.

On leaving school, he entered the Academy at Hoxton. On the dissolution of that institution, Mr. Rowe and others of the students entered themselves of the new Dissenting College which was finally established at Hackney. But though the name of Mr. Rowe stands first in the Matriculation Book of the College, where he is recorded as having entered, September, 1786, and left, June, 1787, he never resided within its walls. The students, during this session, boarded themselves in or near London, and attended the lectures of the professors in Dr. Williams's Library, the use of which was liberally granted by the Trustees for this object, as it has been for various other purposes involving the general interests of Protestant Dissenters. In this year Mr. Rowe officiated occasionally for Dr. Kippis, and at the afternoon service of the Gravel-Pit Meeting, Hackney. On the completion of his education he accepted a cordial and unanimous invitation to become one of the ministers of the congregation assembling in High Street, Shrewsbury. On the death of Mr. Fownes, who had officiated there forty-

one years, Mr. Rowe was chosen sole minister; and in this capacity he remained till 1793, when he found it necessary to require assistance in his public duties. The congregation applied to Dr. Kippis, and he recommended to them Mr. Arthur Aikin, who was joint minister for two years. Mr. Aikin then quitted the ministry and devoted himself to literary and scientific pursuits, in which he has obtained much celebrity.

Mr. Rowe's connexion with the congregation at Shrewsbury was in every respect happy. His public services were acceptable, and there were several families and many individuals of his flock to whom he was attached by the ties of friendship. The family of the Masons shewed great affection towards him; he enjoyed the intimacy and confidence of Mr. Tayleur, the opulent and liberal supporter of free Dissenting principles; in the Hughes family, at Hanwood, of whom Mrs. Mary Hughes was so distinguished a member, he was looked up to as a friend and adviser; and when the amiable sisters changed their residence, many years after Mr. Rowe's removal to Bristol, they transplanted themselves to that city, mainly for the sake of his society and pastoral instruction; and one gentleman, Mr. Serjeant, accompanied him to the same place and lived in his house some years.

In the year 1788 he married his couisn, Mary, sister of Richard Hall Clarke, Esq., of Bridwell House, Devon. This connexion was the source of unfeigned happiness to both parties. Several children were born to them at Shrewsbury, of whom two died in their infancy.

Notwithstanding the usefulness and comfort of this situation, he found great inconvenience in his distance from his relatives; and for this as well as other reasons, he accepted an invitation to become one of the ministers of Lewin's Mead. The mode of this appointment was agreeable to his best feelings. He now entered into a wider sphere of labour, more adequate to his talents and zeal. His pulpit-services were highly estimated by his new flock. Being free from other engagements, he devoted himself with great assiduity to his pastoral duties. He

was not only the spiritual overseer of his flock, but also in many cases their temporal adviser, for which office he was well qualified by his wisdom and discretion. He was a liberal and active supporter of the charities of Bristol, in the management of some of which, especially of the Infirmary, he took a prominent and very useful part. By education and principle a friend to civil and religious liberty, he stood forward on many occasions to uphold what he regarded as the righteous cause. He gave all the assistance in his power to successive liberal candidates for the representation of the city in the House of Commons; and though naturally repugnant to tumultuous assemblies, he presented himself under a sense of duty at the "No Popery" meeting in 1813, and delivered a manly, argumentative speech against the prevailing bigotry and delusion. This speech, though unavailing for the moment, had no doubt some influence in bringing over his fellow-citizens to more Christian principles and more generous feelings.*

Mr. Rowe's style of preaching was plain and practical; his enunciation distinct and emphatic; his manner serious, earnest, and impressive. He considered it to be the peculiar advantage of Dissenting ministers that they are at liberty to take occasion of passing events in their prayers as well as sermons, in order to fix attention upon the ways of Divine Providence; and he frequently made a judicious and pious use of afflictive and other events within the circle of the congregation.

From his youth he was a decided Unitarian. He was one of the first members of the Western Unitarian Society, and continued his support of this institution, according to its original basis, as long as he lived. His religious opinions were not in other respects peculiar, unless we may add that he espoused the middle scheme on the subject of future punishment, namely, that the finally impenitent will be in the end destroyed. For this doctrine, especially as distinguished from that of the final restitution of the wicked, which was received by the greater part of

* See this excellent speech in Mon. Repos., O. S., Vol. viii. p. 137.

his contemporary Unitarian brethren, at one period of his life he manifested a degree of zeal which some of his friends judged to be disproportionate to its real importance.

It was the will of Heaven that Mr. Rowe should be tried by successive heavy afflictions. In 1823 he lost a brother, Mr. Lawrence Rowe, of Brentford, for whom he had a strong affection. He sustained a more bitter trial in 1825 by the decease of his beloved wife, whose character endeared her to all who knew her, and particularly to those that were connected with her by domestic ties.* His sorrows were soon after renewed and aggravated by the untimely decease of his only son, who died in Mexico, whither he had gone to fill an office in a mining company. Parental grief expressed and relieved itself after a time by a tribute to his memory, which is one of the most touching effusions a father's heart ever poured forth in honour of a son's virtues.† Another melancholy event severely tried Mr. Rowe's parental feelings. This was the death of his eldest daughter, the wife of Benjamin H. Bright, Esq. Her connexion in so close a relationship with this highly respected family had been a source of much satisfaction and joy to him, and its dissolution by her untimely decease drew a cloud over some of his brightest prospects.

It was now painfully evident to those about him, that his spirits were drooping and his general health declining. He manifested several paralytic symptoms, and, in the month of January, 1831, experienced a decided seizure. This did not, happily, affect his mind, though it impaired his bodily strength, and in this weakened state he suffered much from the cold of the following winter. It was recommended to him by his medical friends to try the effect of a warmer climate; and in the summer of 1832 he sent in his resignation to the society at Lewin's Mead. He thus terminated a connexion of thirty-four

* See Two Sermons preached at Lewin's Mead, Oct. 16, 1825: the First occasioned by the death of Mrs. Rowe. By the Rev. Robert Aspland.

† See Mon. Repos., N. S., Vol. ii. p. 567.

years' continuance, which had been upon the whole a happy one, and which his people look back upon with gratitude to his memory for his vigilant and faithful attention to their spiritual and eternal interests.

He then proceeded to pay a visit to his relations, Professor and Mrs. Grottanelli, at Sienna, in Italy. His daughter, the only survivor of eight children, of whom five died in their infancy, accompanied him on this, his last journey. This lady thus concludes an interesting account of her father's illness during his visits at Rome, Naples, and the Baths of Lucca:

"After we arrived at the Baths, my father's extreme weakness deprived him of all hope of resuming his journey; but the restlessness which had attended the earlier stages of his disease had subsided; he was pleased with our house and the situation; though generally unable to go farther, he sometimes sat for an hour or two in the garden. He was, too, most gratefully attached to our friends, and I am sure they will always reflect with pleasure on the comfort they afforded him in his latter days. We reached Sienna on the 19th of May, and on the 2nd of July, at eleven at night, he died. He had been confined to his bed two days. He was sensible till within a few hours of his death, and had for some days been aware that his end was fast approaching. He was perfectly resigned and composed, and often spoke of his absent friends, and mentioned little remembrances which he wished me to give them. He had no fresh seizure, nor any particular disease that would have proved fatal, but seemed to sink from exhaustion, and at length fell asleep. He was buried in the Protestant ground at Leghorn."*

* Christian Reformer, N. S., Vol. i. p. 266.

BATH.

"The city of Bath has long been famous for the advantages conferred upon it by nature. Of late years, art has increased its celebrity, by adding to its elegance; so that, were we to name this place as one of the most beautiful and extraordinary cities of modern Europe, we should not, perhaps, be taxed with perverse partiality, or be guilty of injudicious encomium. Its situation and appearance are at once singular and elegant. Placed originally in the bottom of a vale formed by swelling hills which rise in all directions around it, the old city did not for centuries extend its bounds beyond those which were first marked out for it by the Romans. But the salutary effects produced by its waters having awakened a very general attention in the early part of the eighteenth century, the resort of company to the city became so great as to induce some enterprising spirits to speculate in building. Success crowned the attempt, and gave rise to other trials equally fortunate, which were repeated and continued till about the year 1790, when the paralyzing effects of war checked them altogether; so that, from a small town, the diameter of which did not much exceed three hundred yards, Bath rapidly swelled to a large city, stretching in different directions upwards of one mile and a half. Of the many streets thus added to old Bath, some climb the south-eastern side of Lansdown, and others spread themselves to the north-east, along the flat valley through which the river Avon pursues its winding course. A beautiful limestone, found in the immediate neighbourhood in inexhaustible quantities, furnished materials to the builders, who judiciously availed themselves of it, in constructing squares and crescents, parades and streets, designed and disposed for the most part with classical taste and elegance."—Warner.

Population in 1811,—38,408; in 1821,—46,700; in 1831,—50,802.

TRIM STREET CHAPEL.*

MANY ministers were ejected from Bath and the neighbouring villages by the Act of Uniformity. Twenty-six years, however, elapsed before the circumstances in which the Dissenters of this city were placed allowed of their having a place of public worship and a permanent ministry.

Among the ejected ministers who lived here after 1662, were Mr. Long, of Bath; Mr. Green, his assistant; Mr. Baker, of Bath, afterwards Master of the Grammar School; Mr. Bodin, of Wotton-under-Edge; Mr. Philips, of Sherborne; Mr. Afflatt, of Clutton; and Mr. Crees, of Combhay. We do not learn that either of these filled the office of Pastor of a Dissenting congregation, though it is probable that most of them contributed by private preaching and conversation to excite and keep alive a deep interest in religion, and a high estimation of the rights of conscience.

The first settled minister was Mr. Christopher Taylor, who was appointed to the office about the

* This street derived its name from Alderman Tryme, who lived in it many years ago, and to whom part of it belonged. It was originally called Tryme Street.

year 1688. It has been said that, at this time, the congregation met in a shear-shop, Bath being then a clothing town. In 1692, they removed to a meeting-house which they had built in a place then called Frog Lane, now New Bond Street. About this time Dr. Coleman became their minister, probably as an assistant to Mr. Taylor; and under the care of these gentlemen the congregation increased. The earliest register of baptisms is by Dr. Bennet Stevenson, who was minister from 1719 to 1756, and baptized 343 children, whose parents were chiefly farmers, tradesmen, and labourers. Many of these persons lived at the villages of Bath-ford, Bath-wick, Bath-easton, Bradford, English-coombe, Greenway, Marshfield, Mountain-coombe, Oddown, Southstoke, Twerton, and Weston. The ministry of Dr. Stevenson was also attended by several persons of rank and property, particularly by Lady Levett, the widow of Sir Richard Levett, Alderman of London, and who bequeathed* books to the value of £30. for the use of the minister of the congregation and his successors. The Trustees have been accustomed, in compliance with a clause in the will, to pay the amount in money to each minister on his election, and to receive it again on his resignation or death. One of the executors was Mr. Howse, whose son and grandson have succes-

* The will is dated Oct. 7, 1722, and provides particularly against any claim being set up by the Established Church. Lady Levett's high reputation as an enemy to ecclesiastical usurpation is acknowledged in Dr. Calamy's dedication to her of one of his sermons.

sively inherited this simple trust. There is no other endowment.

Of the life and ministry of Dr. Stevenson I have been able to obtain only a few particulars. He was settled at Sidmouth before he became the minister of this congregation. Some of the present members have heard him represented as a fluent and very animated preacher. The large size of the congregation in his time, and the circumstance that many of the poorer classes were his hearers, may be partly attributed to his preaching extempore. Tradition also speaks of the good Doctor as a vehement cushion-thumper. He had a large family; several of his grandchildren are still living, and are useful members of various Unitarian congregations. Dr. Stevenson died in Bath universally lamented, March 23, 1756, and was succeeded in the pastoral office by Mr. John Frank.* Mr. Frank is said to have been educated either at the Taunton or Bridgwater Academy.† He was chosen assistant to Dr. Stevenson in 1753, succeeded him on his death, and remained at Bath till his own death in 1780. The congregation continued to prosper under his care, and he was greatly respected by Christians of all

* This gentleman had been Dr. Stevenson's assistant, and preached his funeral sermon. "For a few years," he says, "as a son with the father I have served with him in the Gospel. And a father he was indeed, worthy of being honoured as the guide of my youth, whose counsels were dictated equally by wisdom and affection." This interesting sermon is entitled, "The character and blessedness of those who die in the Lord." Nothing can be more pleasing than the allusions to the harmony and love which subsisted among the author, the deceased, and the congregation."

† Private information by a nephew of Mr. Frank.

denominations for his talents, his gentlemanly manners, and his benevolent spirit. Mr. Frank was followed by Mr. Edward Armstrong, of whose death there is a short notice in the Protestant Dissenters' Magazine.* He was minister of the congregation from 1780 to 1789; he was then obliged to resign the charge on account of infirmities; but he appears to have survived seven or eight years. He was much esteemed, not only by his own people, but by many other inhabitants of the city. By his aid several excellent charitable institutions obtained large pecuniary support and were placed on a liberal and permanent basis. Before he commenced his ministry in Bath, a gradual change had been wrought in the character of the congregation, so that the majority became composed of the rich rather than the poor. This circumstance is to be regretted whenever or wherever it occurs; it generally indicates, if not the preaching of "some other gospel" than that which was preached by the Saviour of mankind, yet an inattention to the deepest wants of human nature, and to that beautiful characteristic of Christianity—its adaptation to men of all classes and capacities. With reference, however, to the Bath congregation, great allowances were to be made: about the middle and at the close of the last century, large additions were made every year to the educated and highly refined population of the city; the increased attendance of such persons at the Presbyterian chapel naturally encouraged

* Vol. iv. p. 120.

its minister to adopt a more intellectual style of preaching; such a style might perhaps have been skilfully accommodated to the understandings of the poor, but it was not; and that large and useful class were obliged to go where they could be both interested and improved.

Several new religious societies were formed in Bath in the course of the last century. A secession from the Presbyterians seems to have taken place as early as 1726. In that year Mr. Henry Dolling, a Baptist, yet a Trustee of the meeting-house, united with a few other Baptists and licensed his house in Widcombe for public worship. But it was nearly thirty years before the new church consisted of fifty members, and prior to this period a small body of Quakers were for a long time the only other Dissenters in Bath. The register of baptisms, kept by Mr. Frank from the death of Dr. Stevenson in 1756 till 1780, leads to the conclusion that the congregation was nearly as large during the greater part of this interval as it had ever been. It was about the middle of the century that those efforts were made which, if they did not at once diminish the Presbyterian interest so much as might be expected, tended in a great degree to prevent its subsequent growth. Mr. Wesley visited Bath in 1738, and laid the foundation of the large congregation now assembling in the spacious chapel in New King Street. In the year 1752, Mr. Cennick and other ministers of the Bristol and Kingswood Moravian society formed a church of that

denomination in this city. About twelve years afterwards came Lady Huntingdon and gave orders for the erection of a chapel at her own expense, which was in due time opened by the Rev. G. Whitfield. From the large congregation meeting in that place sprang another, whose origin as well as system of church government well entitle it to the appellation Independent. Lady Huntingdon being offended by the introduction of several lay ministers into her pulpits, gave notice that they should no longer officiate, and that especial care should be taken to exclude Rowland Hill and Torial Joss. In consequence of this notice, which was read by the preacher of her chapel at the Vineyards, in 1779, sixteen members withdrew, and commenced the formation of the very numerous and respectable society of which Mr. Jay is the present minister.* Besides the congregations already mentioned, there are now in the city of Bath two of the Baptist denomination; one of the Methodist, meeting in a handsome chapel, with the simple and scriptural inscription, *Deo Sacrum;* two of the Roman Catholic, exclusive of that connected with the magnificent establishment at Prior Park; and eighteen of the Church of England.

When it is remembered that, in many of the churches and chapels occupied by these societies, there have been zealous and popular preachers, it cannot be a source of surprise that the Presbyterian

* Life of the Rev. Mr. Porter, of Bath, by the Rev. Mr. Cater.

congregation was gradually diminished. It should also be remembered that its ministers, obedient to the dictates of their consciences, introduced Arian and Unitarian sentiments, and thereby deterred many from becoming their hearers who would otherwise have done so, on the principles of Protestant Dissent. This society, however, was long respectable for its numbers, and included several individuals distinguished not only by their opulence and station in society, but also by professional skill, literary reputation, and high moral worth. Among those who attended the chapel during the ministry of Mr. Broadhurst, was Sir Robert Clayton, Bart., the author of several well-known works. For many years Dr. Cogan and the Rev. John Simpson, whose memories are revered by all who have studied their writings, were constant and zealous worshipers here. Dr. Parry, the father of the celebrated Arctic navigator, and his family, were connected with the congregation. So was the late Sir Benjamin Hobhouse, whose name often appears as the chairman of the meetings, and the baptisms of whose children, with one or two exceptions, are recorded in the register. Names, now fast becoming still more unknown among Dissenters,—witness Mr. Twiss, father of Mr. Horace Twiss, M. P., and Lord Carrington, are found in the lists of members. And not a few Presbyterian ministers, after finishing their public labours in other places, have come hither, as did their predecessors the ejected ministers, some in consequence of ill health, and others to enjoy the

society and scenery of this noble city. The following may be mentioned:

The Rev. William Billingsley, here in 1772.

The Rev. Malachi Blake, from 1772 to 1780.

The Rev. David Evans lived here, and went to and from Marshfield, where his congregation met, every Sunday.

The Rev. John Simpson, from 1791 till his death, 1813.

The Rev. Edmund Butcher, from 1821 till his death, 1822.

The Rev. Theophilus Browne, from 1823 till his death, 1835.

The Rev. Thomas Watson came to reside here in 1804.

The Rev. Thomas Broadhurst has resided here since he resigned his office of pastor, in 1809.

In the year 1795, the congregation found it necessary to relinquish their old meeting-house in Frog Lane and erect the present building. The expense of this undertaking, including the purchase of the ground, amounted to nearly £2500., and the whole, with the exception of about £200., which was contributed by friends at a distance, was defrayed by the congregation. The largest contributor was H. E. Howse, Esq., who gave altogether nearly £400. To him the congregation are also indebted for their picturesque burial-ground, situated at Lyncomb, about a mile from the city, and presented in the year 1819. Here is a small chapel, in

which the funeral services are conducted; and here rest the remains of many excellent worshipers. One of the first interments was that of a very aged man, with whose form many are familiar, as the original of the popular painting called "The Woodman"; he was a long time in the service of Mr. Howse as a gardener; the painting was executed by Mr. Barker, an eminent artist at Bath. But we have wandered from the chapel; as many would gladly do who know the difference between Trim Street and Lyncomb. Yet the situation is central; on one side and within a short distance are Queen Square and several handsome streets; but the nearest streets are very uninviting. The building is oblong; it is too lofty, there being only one gallery. In this gallery there is an organ; and under it, near one of the entrances, a book-case with the Chapel Library. At the entrance from Trim Street is a vestry. The interior of the chapel has lately assumed an air of great comfort and neatness. The pews and gallery have been painted in imitation of oak, and the light through the windows over the pulpit has been softened by the introduction of ground and coloured glass. Two handsome marble tablets have also been erected with the following inscriptions:

In memory of
Henry Edward Howse, Esq.,
Nine years Chamberlain of this city.
He was
A kind friend to the poor, the ignorant, and the afflicted;
A generous contributor to the erection of this chapel;

A ZEALOUS FRIEND TO THE DIFFUSION,
AND
A FAITHFUL WITNESS TO THE EFFICACY,
OF UNCORRUPTED CHRISTIANITY.
HE DIED DEC. 5, 1834, AGED 82; AND HIS REMAINS
WERE INTERRED AT LYNCOMB, IN A CEMETERY PRESENTED
BY HIM TO THIS CONGREGATION.

"IN SIMPLICITY AND GODLY SINCERITY, NOT WITH FLESHLY WISDOM,
BUT BY THE GRACE OF GOD,
I HAVE HAD MY CONVERSATION IN THE WORLD."

IN THE CEMETERY
BELONGING TO THIS CONGREGATION
ARE INTERRED THE REMAINS OF
THE REV. THEOPHILUS BROWNE, M. A.,
FORMERLY FELLOW OF ST. PETER'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
AND AFTERWARDS RECTOR OF HINTON, IN THE SAME COUNTY.
AN EARNEST STUDY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES LED HIM
TO LEAVE THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,
AND BECOME A MINISTER AMONG UNITARIAN CHRISTIANS,
WHICH OFFICE HE FILLED IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE KINGDOM.
HE DIED MAY 20, 1835, AGED 72.

IN THE SAME TOMB ARE INTERRED THE REMAINS OF
ANN, WIFE OF THE ABOVE,
WHO DIED DECEMBER 25, 1834, AGED 75.

"WHOSOEVER SHALL CONFESS ME BEFORE MEN, HIM WILL I ALSO
CONFESS BEFORE MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN."

A few years before the meeting-house in Frog Lane was taken down, an interesting service was conducted within its walls, at the ordination of Mr. David Jardine. This gentleman had officiated a short time at Warwick, when the congregation invited him to succeed Mr. Armstrong. Mr.

afterwards Dr.) Estlin delivered the sermon, Mr. Wright the address on the design of ordination, and Mr. Belsham the charge; the whole service, including Mr. Jardine's replies, was published. This is a valuable pamphlet; it presents a fair specimen of the tone of thinking and the plan of teaching adopted by the ministers of the Presbyterian congregations of that period; the replies of Mr. Jardine are especially to be admired for the independent yet truly Christian spirit which they breathe. The Trustees of the meeting-house, or, as it was then called, in the title-page of the ordination-service—the Unitarian chapel, testified their sense of the value of Mr. Belsham's assistance, by presenting him with a silver inkstand, a mark of respect with which he was highly gratified.

Three years after the settlement of Mr. Jardine, several members of the congregation expressed a wish to adopt a Liturgy. Their minister cordially agreeing with them, the subject was taken into consideration at several meetings, and at length a majority declared in favour of the alteration. So strong, however, were the objections of the minority, and so decidedly were those objections expressed after the division, that the carrying the resolution into effect would have been attended with many unpleasant circumstances, and the advocates of a Liturgy yielded.

In the year 1797, Mr. Jardine was suddenly removed from his earthly scenes of usefulness. The congregation then invited Mr. Thomas Broadhurst,

who had been first a pupil and afterwards assistant tutor at the New College, Hackney. Before he accepted the invitation from Bath, he officiated successively at Halifax and Taunton. Mr. Broadhurst was the minister of this society about eleven years, during which period the number and character of its members were such as to command general respect. They continued to manifest, on all proper occasions, a lively interest not only in the progress of religious truth, but also in the advancement of objects for promoting the temporal welfare of mankind. The Unitarians have been for many years the only Dissenting society in Bath who make collections twice every year for the two Hospitals in the city. I may here mention that Dr. Bennet Stevenson took an active part in establishing one of these excellent institutions—the Bath Hospital—which receives from all parts of the kingdom patients who require the use of the Bath waters. His name was inserted in the Act of Parliament as one of the earliest officers, and his successors in the Presbyterian congregation have regularly inherited, sanctioned by the usual votes at the General Meetings, the honour thus conferred upon him.

When Mr. Broadhurst relinquished his office of Pastor, the congregation elected Mr. Joseph Hunter. This gentleman was educated at the Manchester College, York; his views of the most important subjects of human inquiry are stated in several discourses published during his residence in Bath. Here he distinguished himself by giving to the

world the fruits of his antiquarian researches, and by promoting the establishment of the Literary Institution, of which he was a highly valuable member. Mr. Hunter quitted Bath in June 1833, to enter upon the office of Commissioner of Public Records, to which another has been added in connexion with the British Museum.—I have now only to remark that the congregation is gradually increasing; several institutions have arisen which may be regarded as particularly useful in giving a right direction to the sympathies and energies of the younger members; and hopes are entertained that, under the blessing of Almighty God, the society will continue to improve in numbers, in piety, in active usefulness, in all goodness.

Ministers.

Christopher Taylor	1688—1699.
Benjamin Coleman, D.D.	1692—1700.
Henry Chandler	1700—1719.
Bennet Stevenson, D.D.	1719—1756.
John Frank	1753—1780.
Edward Armstrong	1780—1789.
David Jardine	1789—1797.
Thomas Broadhurst	1797—1809.
Joseph Hunter, F.A.S.	1809—1833.
Jerom Murch.....	1833.

Mr. CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR was born at Taunton, and educated for the ministry in that town by Mr. Matthew Warren. Having been ordained at Lyme, together with seven others, in 1687, he was recommended by some senior ministers to fill an important station at Bath. Here he met at first with much opposition; but by his solid preaching and prudent conduct he afterwards acquired great esteem, both by those who attended his ministry, and others in the Church of England. He left Bath in 1699, to become pastor of the congregation in Leather Lane, London, where he remained with much satisfaction to his hearers until within a short period of his death in 1723. Mr. Joshua Bayes, who preached his funeral sermon, speaks very highly of his qualifications for the ministry and of the manner in which he discharged its duties, and represents him as a warm, active friend to the cause of Protestant Dissent. Mr. Taylor published two sermons: one upon the thanksgiving for the union with Scotland, May 1, 1707; the other on the death of Mr. John Hind, Nov. 6, 1704; and he drew up a Latin epitaph for his tutor, Mr. Warren.*

Dr. COLEMAN was a native of New England. He received his education in Harvard College, where he graduated in 1692, being then only twenty years of age. Soon afterwards he took a voyage to England, was ordained in London, and entered immediately on his office at Bath. Here, however, he appears to have been only the colleague of Mr. Taylor, and to have remained no longer than eight years, at the expiration of which he was chosen first minister of a large congregation in Brattle Street, Boston, U. S. There he laboured with equal diligence till he attained the age of seventy-three, when he died, "leaving a reputation (to use the words of a contemporary) which will be dear to his country as long as zeal for the interests of sacred

* Further particulars of Mr. Taylor's character may be seen in Toulmin's Hist. of Prot. Diss., Appendix, p. 569.

literature and the conversion of the Indian nations shall be held in due esteem." He distinguished himself not only as a profound scholar, a deeply impressive preacher, and a gentleman of the most polite and Christian bearing, but also by his public philanthropic efforts, among which was the publication of a treatise; reprinted in England by Mr. Daniel Neal, designed to recommend inoculation for the small-pox. The life of Dr. Coleman was written by his son-in-law, the Rev. Mr. Turrell, and published in an 8vo. volume in 1749; of his talents as a preacher, the curious may form an opinion from a printed volume of his sermons on sacramental occasions, published at Boston, N. E., 1728.*

Mr. CHANDLER was the son of a respectable tradesman at Taunton, who suffered severe persecution in the reign of Charles II. Inheriting his father's attachment to the cause of Protestant Dissent, he began his ministry towards the close of the same reign—a time of peculiar difficulty and discouragement. He had been prepared for his office first in the grammar-school of his native town, and afterwards in the academy of Mr. Doolittle, at Islington. Prior to his settlement at Bath, he preached successively at Malmesbury, in Wiltshire; Hungerford, in Berkshire; and Coleford, in Somersetshire; but only remained a short time in each place. His first publication consisted of two practical sermons delivered in Bath about the year 1705, one of which is introduced with expressions of gratitude to a Mr. Adams, of London, who was very generous to the author and gave him a library. In 1713, Mr. Chandler published a charge delivered at Gloucester at the ordination of Mr. Denham, whom he exhorts "to preach intelligibly"—"good sense backed with strong scripture argument"—"for (he says) we can neither be directed nor entertained by what we do not understand." Soon afterwards, he entered the lists with Mr. Thomas Carte the historian, a noted Jacobite and reader at the Abbey Church, in

* Communicated by Mr. Wilson.

consequence of a sermon preached by Mr. Carte in vindication of Charles II. from certain charges relating to the Irish Rebellion. After sustaining the character of an able and faithful minister of Christ forty years, nineteen of which were spent in Bath, Mr. Chandler entered into his rest, leaving three children: Mrs. Mary Chandler, the author of several poems; Dr. Samuel Chandler, the celebrated minister at the Old Jewry; and Mr. John Chandler, an eminent apothecary in King Street, Cheapside.

Mr. DAVID JARDINE was born in the year 1766, at Abergavenny. His father was a Dissenting Minister in that town, and the tutor of an Academy for training young men for the same profession. He was educated first by his father and Dr. Davies, another tutor in the Academy at Abergavenny, and subsequently at Homerton, where he saw reason to renounce the Calvinistic opinions of his family and adopt the Unitarian ones of Dr. Priestley. This having rendered him obnoxious to his tutors, he was removed to Daventry, and finished his studies under the Rev. T. Belsham, who delivered the charge at his ordination at Bath. In the same year Mr. Jardine accepted an invitation from Warwick, and spent a few months in that town much respected. A desire to be near his brother, Dr. Lewis Jardine, then of Bristol, afterwards of America, now induced him to remove to Bath. That his ministerial talents were highly estimated and his religious principles very decided, may be inferred from the fact that, in the following year, he received an invitation to be co-pastor with Dr. Priestley at Birmingham, which, however, he declined. In the year 1793, he married the eldest daughter of George Webster, Esq., of Hampstead, and soon afterwards took a small estate at Pickwick, about seven miles from Bath, where he resided during the week, and added to his literary labours those of agriculture. Both, however, were soon terminated. On Sunday, March 5, 1797, he preached twice and administered the Lord's Supper. On the following

Friday, as he was walking in his fields, he was seized with a fit of apoplexy and conveyed speechless to his house, where he expired the same evening. Thus suddenly, and, to human appearance, prematurely, did Providence see fit to take a man who possessed most of the best qualifications of a minister of the gospel, and who, during his short career, did much to defend and draw attention to the doctrines of Unitarian Christianity. Mr. Jardine published three pamphlets: 1. A Declaration at his Ordination. 2. Three Discourses on the Redemption of the World by Jesus Christ; with an Appendix on the doctrine of the Atonement and the importance of having right sentiments in Religion. 3. A Reply to the Rev. John Simpson on the subject of Religious Fasts. After his death, two volumes of his sermons were published by Dr. Estlin, of Bristol, and dedicated to their mutual friend, B. Hobhouse, Esq., M. P., afterwards Sir B. Hobhouse, Bart. Prefixed to these sermons is a memoir by the editor, from which the above particulars are taken. Mr. Jardine left a son and two daughters; the former resides near London, and is well known as a member of the legal profession and a valuable promoter of various important undertakings.

ASHWICK.

Ashwick lies on the borders of the Mendip Hills, about 3 miles from Shepton Mallet. It long supplied the city of Bath and the surrounding district with Coals, which are still dug in the neighbourhood. It was also noted for its manufacture of hosiery until the extensive introduction of machinery, and the consequent diminution of manual labour in small places. The houses are widely scattered; part of the hamlet of Oakhill lies in the parish, and is remarkable for a good house standing in a romantic situation, and built by J. Billingsley, Esq., a member of the Presbyterian congregation.

OLD MEETING.

THE early history of Nonconformity, in retired places, excites more than common admiration. In populous towns, we are not surprised to observe a spirit of earnest inquiry and Christian freedom. There, ministers of superior talent and liberality were generally stationed; and the odium they incurred, by thinking for themselves, was shared by many. But the inhabitants of obscure villages, though often blessed with pastors of learning and piety were, in most cases, few in number, comparatively uncultivated, and placed in awe of country justices and the owners of the soil. Amidst these discouraging circumstances we see minds determined to be free; and the interest of the spectacle is not unfrequently heightened by the scenes in which the struggles were made. At this period the triumphs of faith were generally achieved, not in the "busy haunts of men," but in the depth of a beautiful valley or beneath the shelter of a friendly wood. Even here the persecuted Nonconformists were unsafe; so often were they interrupted in their devotions that they at length fancied every rustling of the leaves to be the sound of the footsteps of their

enemies; at the slightest sign of disturbance the preacher lowered his voice, and, together with his hearers, began to suffer in imagination from the rude hands of the constable, the arbitrary questions of the magistrate, and the noisome air of the county gaol.

Such sights are presented by the scanty accounts of Nonconformity at Ashwick. The first pastor of whom we know any thing is Mr. Nicholas Billingsley, the son of an ejected minister. He probably settled at Ashwick soon after the passing of the Toleration Act. In the reigns of Charles II. and James II., the Nonconformists of the neighbourhood, including Shepton Mallet, assembled, in retired houses, or, when the weather permitted, in an adjoining wood.* They, however, fared better than others. Their intolerant enemies, the informers, were kept at a distance by the steady and determined courage of a number of hardy colliers who worked in the neighbourhood, and sometimes attended the meeting.† About the time of the Revolution they opened a place of worship at Downside, about a mile from Ashwick, towards Bath, and there they assembled till 1696, when they formed themselves into separate societies. Those of Ashwick fitted up a house in their own parish, and those of Shepton erected a chapel in the town.

The Ashwick division soon became numerous. About the year 1703, they built a place of worship in which they assembled upwards of 50 years.

* Nightingale's History of Somersetshire. † P. D. M. iv. 364.

During that period the congregation consisted chiefly of colliers and hosiers, and was not without a fair proportion of well cultivated minds. An anecdote is related, which shews that they possessed both earnestness and integrity with regard to religious matters. Soon after Mr. James Pierce, of Exeter, gave an impulse to inquiry by his spirited conduct, Mr. Billingsley, the pastor at Ashwick, avowed himself a convert to his opinions. The congregation were disappointed and grieved. Fully convinced of the truth of the sentiments in which they had been educated, they requested Mr. Billingsley to retire and allow them to choose another minister. He complied, but admonished them to search the Scriptures once more for the purpose of examining calmly and impartiality the grounds of their faith. This admonition they attended to, while they were deliberating on the choice of a new pastor, and the result was, they also embraced Arian views of the gospel, and went back to their faithful minister.

It was during his ministry that Mr. (afterwards Dr.) James Foster came to the neighbourhood. He, also, was one of those who had been led by Mr. Pierce's writings and his own study of the Scriptures, to side with the heterodox party; but *his* pastoral advice was not so successful as that of Mr. Billingsley. His sentiments had rendered him so obnoxious, at Milbourn Port, where he was the pastor of a congregation, that he was obliged to seek an asylum in the house of his friend under

the Mendip Hills. Anxious to be useful without concealing his convictions, Mr. Foster was accustomed, while residing in this obscure but hospitable retreat, to preach to two plain congregations in the neighbourhood, one at Coleford, the other at Wokey, which, together, raised him only £15. per annum! Some of his best works were composed in an old summer house, almost covered with ivy, on the property of J. Billingsley, Esq., who, some years afterwards, caused a small stone with the following inscription to be placed in the building.

"SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF THE CELEBRATED JAMES FOSTER, D.D., WHO IN THIS HUMBLE AND RETIRED MANSION, SECLUDED FROM THE FURY OF BIGOTS AND THE CARES OF A BUSY WORLD, SPENT SEVERAL YEARS; AND COMPOSED MANY OF THOSE EXCELLENT DISCOURSES ON NATURAL RELIGION AND SOCIAL VIRTUE, (WITH THE ANNEXED OFFICES OF DEVOTION,) WHICH HAVE BEEN READ WITH UNIVERSAL ADMIRATION DURING THE LAST AND PRESENT AGES; AND WHICH, WHILE THEY EXHIBIT TO POSTERITY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL DISPLAY OF THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES AND IMPORTANT DUTIES OF HUMAN LIFE, WILL IMMORTALIZE THE NAME AND MEMORY OF THEIR LEARNED AND PIOUS AUTHOR."*

* Collinson's History of Somersetshire, ii. 449. Dr. Foster removed from Ashwick to Trowbridge, in Wilts, where he adopted the practice of Adult Bapitism. There, his circumstances were so low, that he had serious thoughts of quitting the ministry and learning the trade of a glover. From doing this he was saved by the unexpected generosity of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, who took him into his house as Chaplain. And a few years afterwards we find him, as one of the Lecturers at the Old Jewry, enjoying unexampled popularity, attracting a confluence of persons of every rank, station and quality, and giving occasion to the well known lines of Pope—

"Let modest *Foster*, if he will, excel
Ten Metropolitans in preaching well."

An interesting memoir of Dr. Foster may be seen in a valuable collection of tracts by the Rev. Jared Sparks, an American minister, who has done much, in many ways, towards enriching the literature of his country.

The congregation at Ashwick long remained numerous and respectable. The descendants of Mr. Billingsley were efficient co-operators with his successor—Mr. David Lewis. About the year 1758, when this gentleman removed to Frenchay, and Mr. Evan Herbert was chosen to succeed him, the society resolved to erect a new chapel. The old structure was falling into decay; they held it by a precarious tenure; and they were desirous of having a place more in the centre of the congregation, and thus suiting the convenience of many persons from adjoining parishes. Accordingly they sold the old building, which was converted into cottages, and erected another in the same parish, half a mile nearer those parts from which most of the people came to worship. This chapel has two galleries, one for women and another for men, and adjoining it is a burial ground. In 1783, Mr. Herbert retired, and three years afterwards died at Ashwick. He was educated at Carmarthen, settled first at Wrington and then at Stalbridge. His successor was Mr. King, who only remained a short time, and was followed by the present minister, Mr. John Evans. The congregation then consisted of nearly two hundred persons;—but they are described as chiefly mere hearers, who attended without any fixed opinions, and because there was no service at convenient hours in the churches in the neighbourhood. Consequently, when Methodism was generally known in the district, and a chapel erected in almost every village; when, also, the Bishop of the

diocese was enabled, by augmentations of the livings from Queen Anne's Bounty, to obtain service twice a day in the churches, the number of Mr. Evans's "hearers" diminished. For many years he has only been encouraged to persevere by the attendance and support of a few who are attached to their views of the gospel from principle as well as early associations, and who, if they see no prospect of a revival of the congregation in their time, may, at least, be consoled by remembering that they have adhered to it through evil report and through good report.

Ministers.

NICHOLAS BILLINGSLEY	1710—1740.
DAVID LEWIS	1740—1757.
EVAN HERBERT	1758—1783
—— KING*	1783—1784.
JOHN EVANS	1784.

NICHOLAS BILLINGSLEY was the younger son of a minister of the same name, who was ejected by the Act of Uniformity from the living at Weobley, in Herefordshire. I have not been able to ascertain any particulars concerning his education, early settlement, and death. It appears, that, in addition to his sermon on the death of Mr. Stogdon, he published a sermon, preached at Frome, in 1716, at the ordination of Dr. Thomas

* Mr. King was educated at Hackney, and removed from Ashwick to Bandon, in Ireland. Mr. Evans was educated at Carmarthen, and settled at Ilfracombe before his removal to Ashwick.

Morgan, author of "The Moral Philosopher." The spirit which these productions breathe, the charitable and truly Christian sentiments they express, are in accordance with the general tenor of this good man's life, and will ensure for his memory the respect of many who have realized the promise,—"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The following passage is a specimen of his style:—

"Let me rather die than that I should, to serve any turn of life, or a party, misrepresent either the principles or practices of any of my brethren or neighbours. Let me rather die than ascribe such persuasions to them as I know they constantly disown; they best know their own thoughts, and have as much right to be believed in the professions they make as I have in mine."

HUBERT STOGDON. The Rev. Mr. Billingsley was also the means of bringing to the neighbourhood of Ashwick, Hubert Stogdon, another minister, whose soul "claimed kindred there," and whose life illustrates the history of the times in which he lived. After receiving his education, successively, under a clergyman in Devonshire, at the free school in Exeter, and at Mr. Hallet's academy, he engaged in the the ministry, as Chaplain, according to the forms of the Dissenters, to Sir John Davy, Bart., at Credy, near Crediton. At this period, about the year 1715, he was "thoroughly orthodox" and declared himself most decidedly against the opinions of Mr. Whiston and Dr. Clarke; but his zeal was at all times tempered by charity, and a consciousness of his liability to err. "Afterwards, (says Dr. Toulmin in his interesting memoir),* by long and deliberate reading, a diligent and candid examination of both sides of the question, with many prayers and tears, with much fear and trembling, he settled into a view of the subject contrary to that in which he had been educated." Prior to this change, Mr.

* M. R. iv. 58. See also Billingsley's sermon on the death of Stogdon, 1728.

Stogdon intended to propose himself for ordination by the United Assembly of Devon and Cornwall ministers; but the clamour which was meanwhile raised against him as a supposed Arian, Deist or even Atheist, and the unscriptural authority exercised by the assembly in judging the qualifications of candidates, rendered it desirable that he should remove to a distance. It was at this period his excellent friend, at Ashwick, first exerted himself on his behalf, though he only knew him by the ill report of some, and the good report of a gentleman, who recommended the young divine to his friendship. "I was persuaded (says Mr. Billingsley,*) that if Mr. Stogdon came, he would have with me a peaceable retreat, though in an obscure corner of the world; and that by a successful attempt to draw him hither, I might be beneficial to myself and neighbours by getting such an one amongst us. I knew that I should hereby incur the censures of many, and of some who had given me real and frequent proofs of their friendship, and very much expose myself. But being fully persuaded that whatever Mr. Stogdon's particular sentiments were, whether right or wrong, the same with mine or different from them, one of such a character could not fail of divine acceptance; and that if I were ashamed or afraid to own him I should not know how to answer it another day. I soon determined what to do." It is then stated that Mr. Billingsley procured Mr. Stogdon's settlement with a small congregation at Wokey, near Ashwick, where he continued seven years, for the first four of which he resided in the house of his generous friend. In 1718 he was ordained at Shepton Mallet. Even at this early period, a few candid minds entertained very different sentiments respecting this ceremony from those which prevail in the present day. "I only mean (says Mr. Billingsley) that he solemnly devoted himself to the sacred office in the presence of many ministers and a great number of people; some of the former assisting and leading the public devotion, whilst all joined in recommending the labours of the person thus de-

* Appendix to Funeral Sermon.

voted, to the Divine direction and blessing; a sermon being preached at the same time and an exhortation given to the faithful discharge of the ministry then expressly and solemnly undertaken." Pursuing his course of free inquiry and acting upon his noble principles, Mr. Stogdon became convinced, whilst at Wokey, of the scriptural authority for Adult Baptism, and, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his friends who thought it might prejudice his interest, which was always the last idea in his own mind, he publicly submitted to the rite. It is gratifying to observe that this circumstance did not prevent him from being engaged by, nor from faithfully serving, a Pædobaptist congregation at Trowbridge, where he happily and usefully spent the remainder of his days.

SHEPTON MALLET.

SHEPTON MALLET is situated five miles from Wells, twelve from Frome, and sixteen from Bath. It lies (says Collinson) chiefly in a recluse valley, interrupted with winding rocky shelves and dingles. In the last century it was famous for its manufactures of woollen cloths and knit stockings, which still afford employment to many.

Population in 1811,—4638; in 1821,—5021; and in 1831,—5330.

SHEPTON MALLET.

THE foundation of the Dissenting cause in this town was laid in 1662. Mr. David Calderwood was then ejected from the living, but there is no account of his subsequent life and labours. The proceedings of the Nonconformists of the neighbourhood, soon after his ejectment, are mentioned in the history of the Ashwick congregation. About the time of the Revolution the people of Shepton, in conjunction with their brethren at Ashwick and the adjoining parishes, opened a place of worship at Downside, and there continued to assemble until 1696.* They then separated, in consequence of their increased numbers and of the distances from which some of them attended, and the inhabitants of Shepton soon afterwards erected a place of worship in their own town, and enjoyed the services of Mr. John Cumming.

The building now occupied by the congregation is probably the original one. There are various marks of antiquity about it, and several indications of its having been enlarged. It contains three gal-

* Prot. Diss. Mag., iv. 364.

leries—one of which has always been used indiscriminately; the other two were formerly appropriated, in accordance with an ancient custom, one to women and the other to men. There are two burial-grounds; one is on a level with the street; the other, which is smaller, is reached by sixteen steps, and is on a level with the chapel. The interior of the building exhibits two monuments with the following inscriptions:

NEAR THIS PLACE LIE THE REMAINS OF MR. SIMON BROWNE, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, A NATIVE OF THIS TOWN, BUT KNOWN THROUGH THE NATION BY HIS WRITINGS. PORTSMOUTH AND LONDON ENJOYED HIS MINISTRY; AND WHEN NATURE WAS OPPRESSED WITH SO STRANGE A DISORDER THAT HE THOUGHT HIMSELF LESS THAN MAN, HE ATTACKED THE BOLDEST INFIDELS OF THE AGE AND TRIUMPHED IN THE CAUSE OF GOD.

HE DIED A. D. 1732, ÆT. 52.

TO THE EVER-VALUABLE MEMORY
OF THE REV. ANTHONY ATKEY,
A LATE WORTHY PASTOR OF THIS CHURCH,
WHOSE SOLID JUDGMENT,
GREAT LEARNING,
COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRISTIANITY,
UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE
AND
INFLEXIBLE VIRTUE,
RENDERED HIM
A MOST RATIONAL, AFFECTIONATE, AND USEFUL PREACHER,
AN ABLE AND SUCCESSFUL ADVOCATE FOR THE RELIGION OF JESUS,
A FAITHFUL AND MOST AGREEABLE FRIEND.
THE WORLD WAS EARLY DEPRIVED
OF THIS BRIGHT ORNAMENT
OF RELIGION AND LIBERTY,
IN THE THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF HIS AGE,
DEC. 27, 1734.

The connexion of Mr. Browne with Shepton Mallet induces me to place a short notice of his disorder among the distinct memoirs. He received part of his education from Mr. Cumming, the first minister at Shepton. The successor of that gentleman, Mr. Aycrigg, removed to Glastonbury some years before Mr. Browne retired to his native town. With the next minister, Mr. Matthew Towgood, he was probably intimate, as he also appears to have been with the fourth on our list, Mr. Anthony Atkey. This name appears in the list of students educated in the Taunton Academy, under Mr. Grove.* Mr. Atkey preached and published a discourse on the death of Mr. Browne, entitled, "The Rectitude of Providence under the severest Dispensations." He also deserves to be had in respectful remembrance for the ability and zeal with which he appeared as an advocate for Christianity, in the controversy with Dr. Tindal.† The congregation at Shepton had reason to rejoice that some of the best defences of revealed religion, accompanied by the most convincing arguments in favour of liberty of conscience, emanated from their circle.

Until the end of the last century, this congregation afforded a fair specimen of the Dissenting societies in the West of England. Many of the members were enlightened and respectable manufacturers,

* Mon. Repos., O. S., Vol. xiii. p. 90.

† His object is thus expressed in the title-page of his work: "The main argument of a late book, entitled 'Christianity as old as the Creation,' fairly stated and examined, or a short view of that whole controversy.'"

possessing considerable influence in the town and neighbourhood. They manifested good sense in choosing as their instructors a succession of pious and liberal men, and gratitude in profiting by their counsels. The latter virtue was also manifested at Shepton by substantial acts of generosity. The society have been remarkable for showing, from the beginning, a greater desire to promote the discharge of moral duties than to excite attention to those points on which Christians differ. This course, however, has tended to lessen their numbers. As soon as other denominations obtained a footing in the town, attention to opinions was excited; it was at length found that the majority of those who attended places of worship preferred doctrinal preaching; and the Presbyterian congregation saw some of the oldest and most valuable members taken to their rest, without leaving others to supply their places. Of four of the ministers biographical notices will be given in the following pages. Mr. Shute, the last but one, was educated at the Exeter Academy, under Mr. Kenrick and Mr. Bretland. On leaving Ashwick, he quitted the ministry and engaged in business at Bristol. Mr. Evans was never chosen pastor of the congregation. On the retirement of Mr. Shute he preached as a supply; and in this capacity he has continued ever since, regularly administering the ordinances. He officiates in the morning at Ashwick, and in the afternoon at Shepton.

Ministers.

David Calderwood	1662—1698.
John Cumming, M. A.	1698—1710.
Benjamin Aycrigg	1710—1716.
Matthew Towgood	1716—1730.
Anthony Atkey	1730—1734.
John Sherman, M. D.	1734—1754.
William Peard Jillard	1754—1770.
Benjamin Kiddel	1770—1803.
Henry Shute	1803—1814.
John Evans	1814.

The Rev. John Cumming is supposed to have been of Scottish extraction. He was the uncle and father-in-law of Dr. Cumming, an eminent minister of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, London Wall. He was a learned man, and besides being the minister of the congregation at Shepton Mallet, filled the office of Tutor in that town. He published a sermon on Rev. ii. 2, preached before the mayor of Bridgwater and other members of the corporation, at a lecture established for the reformation of manners, 1699. He probably settled at Shepton soon after the chapel was built; his death occurred in 1710.*

The Rev. Matthew Towgood was the grandson of a minister of the same name, ejected from Hilperton, Wilts., and first cousin to Mr. Micaijah Towgood. At one time he kept a seminary at Colyton, in Devonshire, where he instructed young

* Wilson's History, Vol. ii. p. 494.

men in classical and theological learning—an office for which his solid attainments well fitted him. He afterwards officiated at Poole, but eventually relinquished the ministry and engaged in a brewery. His habits of study and absence of thought, of which many amusing instances were related, rendered him unsuccessful in his new occupation. Mr. Towgood published a small grammatical tract, a sermon preached at Poole, "A Brief Dissertation on Funeral Solemnities," 1745, and "Remarks on the Profane and Absurd use of the monosyllable '*Damn*,'" 1746.

JOHN SHERMAN, M. D.—This gentleman received his education at one of the Scotch Universities, where he took the degree of Master of Arts. There is no account of his having practised as a physician, though he bore the title. He does not appear to have been distinguished as a minister. His first appearance in this character was at the Presbyterian meeting-house in Great St. Thomas, London, where he was chosen assistant to the Rev. B. A. Atkinson. In 1719 he removed to Ware, in Hertfordshire, at which place he preached and printed a funeral sermon for the Rev. John Hughes, whom he succeeded in the pastoral office. He remained at Ware until he accepted the invitation at Shepton, where he died in 1754, after frequent illness, during which he was often obliged to apply to neighbouring ministers for assistance, and sometimes to close the meeting-house, to the great disadvantage of the society. It must be mentioned, to the honour of Dr. Sherman and that of the congregations who elected him, that he was one of the non-subscribing ministers at the Salters' Hall synod in 1719.*

The Rev. WILLIAM PEARD JILLARD was descended on the maternal side from Mr. William Bartlett and Mr. Oliver Peard, two of the ejected ministers. He was the son of Mr. Peter Jillard,

* Wilson, ii. 103.

who was educated at Taunton and settled successively at Bow, near Crediton, Castle Lane, Exeter, Tavistock, and Castle Green, Bristol. W. P. Jillard was born at Tavistock, and removed with the rest of the family, at a very early period of his life, to Bristol, where his classical education was commenced under Mr. Fisher. He entered upon his academical studies in the house of Mr. Moore, at Bridgwater, on whose death he went to study under Dr. Latham, at Findern, in Derbyshire; and he finished his course of preparation at Glasgow, under Dr. Leechman. His first settlement in the pastoral office was at Shepton, where he preached with great acceptance seventeen or eighteen years. So much was he admired as a minister, and so high was the opinion of his learning, good sense, and piety, that more than one overture of preferment in the Church of England was made to him. The temptations to conformity thrown in his way were particularly strong; and his refined taste and polite manners would have led him to value the advantages of a higher station; but he could not be induced to swerve from the path of integrity. His strain of preaching was sensible, liberal, and practical; and yet, probably in consequence of these characteristics, towards the close of his life it was not popular. He removed from Shepton to Bishop's Hull, near Taunton,* where he spent the remainder of his life, twenty-nine years, enjoying general respect and affection. Mr. Jillard left a son and a daughter, to whom Dr. Toulmin dedicated the impressive discourse preached by him on the death of his friend and fellow-labourer.

Mr. SIMON BROWNE.—It was while exercising the pastoral office at the Old Jewry, with great reputation, that Mr. Browne was attacked by the "strange disorder" mentioned in the inscription. He imagined "that Almighty God, by a singular instance of divine power, had in a gradual manner annihilated

* An interesting account of this congregation is given in a note to the sermon on the death of the Rev. W. P. Jillard, by Dr. Toulmin.

in him the thinking substance, and utterly divested him of consciousness;—that though he retained the human shape, and the faculty of speaking in a manner that appeared to others rational, he had all the while no more notion of what he said than a parrot. And, very consistently with this, he looked upon himself as no longer a moral agent, a subject of reward or punishment."* It is singular that, having quitted the ministry and retired to Shepton, in consequence of this idea, though he could seldom be persuaded to pray, even for a blessing on his food, he was not only still distinguished for the performance of all social virtues, but even intent upon literary pursuits. For some time he amused himself with translating several parts of the ancient Greek and Latin poets into English verse. He afterwards composed, for the use of children, an English grammar and spelling-book, an abstract of the scripture history, and a collection of fables. With great labour he also amassed together, in a short compass, all the themes of the Greek and Latin languages, and compiled a dictionary to each of these works. During the two last years of his life, he published "A Disquisition on the Doctrine of the Trinity," "Remarks on Mr. Woolston's fifth discourse on the Miracles of our Saviour," and "A Reply to Tindal's attack on the Religion of Nature and the Christian Revelation." All these works were written at Shepton, with little assistance from books or learned conversation, and with the full impression that all the thinking powers had been taken from him; yet they were pronounced among the best that had appeared on the subject. They display great extent of knowledge, and uncommon argumentative powers; and some of his friends were accustomed to say, "while he imagined he had no soul, he was so acute a disputant, that he could reason as if he was possessed of *two*." Nothing grieved him more than that he could not make his friends believe in his supposed destitution,—a circumstance which he thus alludes to in a suppressed dedi-

* Atkey's funeral sermon, quoted by Wilson in an interesting memoir—Diss. Churches, ii. 342.

cation of his last work to Queen Caroline: "Such a case will certainly strike your Majesty with astonishment, and raise that commiseration in your royal breast which the author has in vain endeavoured to excite in those of his friends; who by the most unreasonable and ill-founded conceit in the world, have imagined that a thinking being could for seven years together live a stranger to its own powers, exercises, operations, and state, and to what the Great God has been doing in it and to it."

BRIDGWATER.

This town was anciently called Brugia, Brugie, Brugge, Brugge-Walter, and Burgh-Walter.

In the time of Edward the Confessor it was the private estate of Merlesuain, a Saxon thane, who lost it at the Conquest; and King William gave it to his follower Walschin or Walter de Dowai, from whom the place derived the distinguishing part of its appellation. The idea that the town derived its name from the bridge was, however, long since entertained, and will perhaps never be relinquished.

It is situated on the banks of the river Parret, which hence, in a bold stream, winds its way towards the estuary of the Bristol Channel. The town is also commodiously situated in a woody, flat country, having rich moors to the north and east, in the great western road leading from the cities of Bath and Bristol to Taunton, Exeter, and the county of Cornwall, being distant forty miles from Bath, thirty-four from Bristol, and eleven from Taunton.

The place has been very large and populous, but frequently diminished by conflagrations and other causes; particularly in the year 1645, when it was besieged by the Parliamentary forces under Sir Thomas Fairfax, all that quarter of the town called *Eastover*, a few houses excepted, was entirely burnt to the ground. At this day the town consists of several good streets, most of which stand on the west side of the river, but communicate with the other part, which was heretofore very considerable, by a lofty and ancient bridge of three arches, begun in the time of King John by William Briwere, lord of the town, and finished by Sir Thomas Trivet, whose arms being a trivet, in allusion to his name, were affixed to the coping of the structure. To the north of this bridge is the quay, which is large and commodious.

COLLINSON.

Population in 1811,—4911; in 1821,—6155; in 1831,—7807.

CHRIST CHURCH CHAPEL.

THE confessor at Bridgwater, on the memorable Bartholomew Day, was Mr. John Norman, a minister of more than usual talent and firmness. He continued to preach here after his ejectment; and having been, for some years, both useful and acceptable, he easily retained a large number of his friends. To the congregation thus formed this excellent man persevered in privately officiating, with the exception of the intervals occasioned by severe persecution and his absence from home, until his death, which occurred about the year 1676.

The Nonconformists' Memorial* contains some interesting anecdotes which shew the difficulties of the first members of this society. Sixteen months after Mr. Norman's ejectment, he was sent with several other ministers to the county jail, and there made a close prisoner for preaching to his people in private. He appeared at the bar of Judge Foster, by whom he was handled very roughly. "Sirrah (he said), do you preach?" "Yes, my Lord." "And why so, Sirrah?" "Because I was ordained to preach the gospel." "How was you ordained?"

* Vol. ii. p. 347.

"In the same manner as Timothy." "And how was that?" "By the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." The Judge was struck with this last reply, and repeated it several times; but he sentenced his victim to pay a fine of a hundred pounds, and to be imprisoned till it was paid.

Mr. Norman remained in Ilchester Gaol eighteen months in consequence of this cruel verdict. Nor would his release have been effected so soon, but for the humanity of Baron Hale, who, going that circuit, took notice of him, and compounded the fine at sixpence in the pound. Nothing daunted by his sufferings, Mr. Norman employed himself in prison in writing a work which he afterwards published, with the title "Christ confessed"; and when he found himself at large, he again pursued the path of duty by preaching in private.

On his removal, the congregation chose as their pastor Mr. John Gardener. Dr. Calamy mentions a person of this name as ejected from Staplegrove, but gives no particulars concerning him. He is supposed to have died about the year 1682.

In 1679 came Mr. John Moore, also an ejected minister, noted for his abilities, exertions, and sufferings. When the Act of Uniformity was put in force against him, he officiated at Holnest and Long Burton, in the county of Dorset. He then retired to Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire, where for a few years he cultivated his own estate, and preached as often as possible to the people in the neighbourhood. He laboured at Bridgwater with great suc-

cess thirty-six years.* He was succeeded by his son, Mr. John Moore, Jun., who continued to be pastor of the congregation till his death, which occurred in 1747, in the seventy-fourth year of his age.†

During the ministry of both father and son, the cause of Dissent flourished at Bridgwater. In 1688, the society was sufficiently numerous to erect a place of worship. About that time Mr. Moore, Sen., established an academy in the town, which maintained a respectable character many years. In the reign of William the Third, the tutor suffered from the still surviving spirit of persecution; being apprehended by a warrant from the Mayor for keeping an academy. Before he died, however, he had the happiness of seeing a great change in the feelings and sentiments of the authorities of the town; his audience gradually became highly respectable both for fortune and numbers, and at length included the whole of the civic magistracy.‡

Mr. Moore, Jun., followed in the steps of his father. The pupils in the academy enjoyed great advantages from his attainments in science and his method of conveying knowledge. While searching the Scriptures, he was led to adopt Arian views of the Gospel,—a circumstance which is said to have lessened the number of the students under his care.§

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 452.

† Bogue and Bennett's History of the Dissenters, Vol. iii. p. 290.

‡ Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 453.

§ "When the *Ariomania* raged in the West, he too was seized, some of his students left him, and the character of his academy sustained a grievous

He continued the Academy as long as he lived. Among his pupils were Mr. Simon Browne, Dr. Samuel Chandler, Dr. Joseph Jeffries, and Mr. Thomas Morgan. A sermon, in reference to his death, by his friend Dr. Amory, represents him as universally beloved in the town and neighbourhood.* An impulse was given to the inquiries of Mr. Moore by the celebrated controversy, during which Mr. Peirce and Mr. Hallet were ejected from their pulpits at Exeter; and the congregation at Bridgwater seems to have adopted the sentiments of its pastor. We have little direct information respecting the opinions of this society during the greater part of the last century; but, judging from those of its ministers, we should say that they were "heterodox." Its distinctive appellation was Presbyterian; and, like many others of the same name, it was distinguished from the beginning by a thorough knowledge and an earnest advocacy of the rights of conscience.

Mr. Moore was succeeded by Mr. Matthew Towgood, only son of the celebrated Micaijah Towgood. This gentleman remained till 1755, when the congregation elected Mr. Thomas Watson, by whom it was faithfully served thirty-eight years. During the interval of Mr. Towgood's removal and the

injury."—Bogue and Bennett, iii. 290. The reader will take all allusions to such tender points from this source *cum grano salis.*

* Mr. Moore, Jun., was the author of a work entitled "Propositions on Natural and Revealed Religion"; also of a tract in answer to Jackson on the Trinity, about the year 1737.

settlement of Mr. Watson, the congregation was supplied by Mr. Lush. I have been favoured with a sight of Mr. Watson's private register,* in which he entered with great regularity the baptisms at which he officiated and the names of his communicants. The former amounted to two hundred and seventy-eight; many of the parents of the children appear to have been in the middle and lower walks of life,—a sure indication of the usefulness of their pastor. There are also some names in the register still remembered in connexion with various undertakings which required the aid of influence, intelligence, generosity, and public spirit. To know that, while the poor listened gladly to the services of the sanctuary, these persons grew in faith and virtue, is to presume that the pure Gospel of Jesus was preached. A large proportion of the communicants became such in consequence of the persuasions of Mr. Watson. He was also the first to establish a Sunday-school in this town. Few men were less anxious than this respected minister to preserve mere sectarian distinctions. It was his opinion, for instance, that the office of baptizing adults should not be confined to those who are generally called Baptist ministers. Although he practised infant sprinkling, he did not deem himself exempted from publicly immersing any persons who wished in this manner to confess Christ before men. Accordingly, his register contains notices of his having performed

* In the possession of his son, the Rev. T. Watson, of Bath.

this interesting ceremony on three occasions,—in 1758, in 1768, and in 1785.*

It was during Mr. Watson's ministry that the spacious chapel was rebuilt. The last service in the old one was conducted June 24, 1787; and the first in the new, May 18, 1788. The form of this building is oblong; the roof is supported by four large pillars, which give the house a heavy appearance. The pulpit is at some distance from the end wall; and behind is a low gallery, or long pew, extending from side to side, originally erected for the use of the corporation, but now appropriated to the Sunday-scholars. Opposite the pulpit is the usual singing gallery, in which is an organ. Within the last few years, a vestry has been built adjoining the chapel, and various improvements introduced in the interior of the building. At another part of the town the congregation have very convenient property, consisting of a minister's house, a burial-ground, and a school-room, the latter having been built lately at the expense of a few individuals. In the chapel and vestry are two marble tablets, with the following inscriptions:

* Whatever may be thought of the use of water at the naming and dedication of children, the example of Mr. Watson in baptizing adults may surely be generally followed with advantage. This is not the place to enter fully into the question, or it would not be difficult to shew that those who make the ordinance of Baptism a ground of division might, without the slightest compromise of principle and with scarcely any inconvenience, lessen in some degree the number of sects in the Christian church, and thus hasten the time when there shall be one fold and one shepherd. The Lord's table does not divide the disciples of Jesus; why should the baptismal font or the baptismal pool?

UNDERNEATH LIE THE REMAINS OF THE REV. THOMAS WATSON, WHO WAS NEARLY THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS THE GOOD, ABLE, FAITHFUL, AND BELOVED PASTOR OF THIS CHRISTIAN CHURCH, AND WHO DIED, UNIVERSALLY LAMENTED, ON THE 5th OF MARCH, 1793, IN THE 67th YEAR OF HIS AGE.

ALSO OF

MARY, HIS MOST DEAR WIFE, DAUGHTER OF RICHARD CODRINGTON, GENT., WHO DIED MARCH 30, 1774, AGED 43.

[ALSO OF THREE CHILDREN, &c., &c.]

TO THE MEMORY OF THOMAS OSLER, UPWARDS OF SIXTY YEARS AN ACTIVE AND EXEMPLARY MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION ASSEMBLING IN THIS PLACE, WHOSE LIFE WAS DILIGENTLY SPENT IN DOING JUSTLY, LOVING MERCY, AND WALKING HUMBLY WITH HIS GOD, THIS TABLET IS GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY HIS SURVIVING CHILDREN. HE WAS BORN JUNE 15, 1745; DIED OCTOBER 26, 1825; AND IS INTERRED IN THIS CHAPEL.

MARY, HIS WIFE, DAUGHTER OF JOHN COLE, GENT., (FORMERLY OF TAUNTON,) AN INDULGENT YET JUDICIOUS MOTHER, AND A STEADFAST FRIEND, DIED MARCH 28, 1792, AGED 42 YEARS.

On the death of Mr. Watson, Mr. William Evans, now of Tavistock, preached here for some months. The successor in the pastoral office was Mr. John Howel, who removed to Bridgwater from Yeovil about the close of the year 1793. This gentleman was originally designed for the Church of England, but found himself impelled by conscientious motives to prefer the Dissenting ministry, and accordingly went to Carmarthen for his academical education. He was an acceptable preacher, and much respected for his gentlemanly manners. His sentiments were

decidedly Unitarian, and he did not hesitate to avow them. After residing here ten years, he was suddenly called to his reward; his remains were interred near those of Mr. Watson, under the vestry.

After the death of Mr. Howel, the congregation were supplied a short time by Mr. John Jones. The next minister was Mr. Houson, of whom the only information I can obtain is, that he remained at Bridgwater till 1815, and then quitted both the town and the Dissenters to enter the Church. He was succeeded by Mr. Tingcombe, from Newport, in the Isle of Wight, formerly one of Mr. Belsham's pupils at Daventry, and now residing at Bristol, to which place he removed to become minister of the Frenchay congregation, about 1826. In this year came Mr. William Steil Browne, who had been a short time minister at Hull; he received part of his education for the ministry at Wymondley; in consequence of a change in his sentiments he removed to the college at York. While he was at Bridgwater, a liturgy was introduced for the use of this society; but it was soon relinquished. In the month of August, 1832, Mr. Browne left for America, where he hoped to find a more extensive field of usefulness and brighter prospects for his family. The respect in which he was held was testified on his removal by two public addresses; one from the congregation, accompanied by a subscription purse; and one from other inhabitants of the town, accompanied by a handsome piece of plate.*

* Unit. Chron., Vol. i. p. 168.

After Mr. Browne's departure, the congregation was supplied for a short time by Mr. Mortimer Maurice, from the college at York. When this gentleman left, to accept an invitation from Chester, the pastoral office was undertaken by Mr. William James, who had been educated under Mr. Acton, of Exeter, and spent the first few years of his ministerial life at Sidmouth. He has the happiness of seeing the Bridgwater congregation continue to increase in numbers and zeal. The alterations and improvements in the chapel indicate an earnestness on the part of the people highly satisfactory and encouraging to their minister. They also support a fellowship fund, a Sunday-school of about one hundred children, meeting in the room lately erected, and a chapel library, which by a wise and benevolent arrangement has been made available to the gratuitous diffusion of knowledge to a considerable extent. We have only to add, that this is, unquestionably, one of those congregations with regard to which the recollections of the past, so far from being saddened, are rendered in a high degree pleasing, by the prospects of the future.

Ministers.

John Norman, M.A.	1662—1675
John Gardener	1675—1682.
John Moore	1679—1717.
John Moore, Jun.	1717—1747.
Matthew Towgood	1747—1755.

THOMAS WATSON	1755—1793.
JOHN HOWEL	1793—1803.
HENRY HOUSON	1805—1815.
JOHN TINGCOMBE	1815—1826.
WILLIAM STEIL BROWNE	1826—1832.
WILLIAM JAMES	1833.

Mr. JOHN NORMAN, M. A., was educated at Exeter College, Oxford, where he was at first servitor to Dr. Conant, the worthy Rector. He had good natural abilities, and by his industry, and the blessing of God on that good Doctor's instructions, acquired a considerable stock of learning, both human and divine. He removed from the University to Bridgwater, where he was very useful till the Bartholomew-Act ejected him. He was an acceptable preacher, and a man of exemplary conversation; much respected here, and in all the western parts of the kingdom.

In addition to the particulars mentioned in the preceding history, the following are found in the Nonconformists' Memorial. While the Judge handled Mr. Norman so roughly, he with great gravity told him, that a liberal education at the University, and the holy calling of the ministry, not stained with any unworthy action, merited good words from his Lordship, and better usage from the world. The Judge seemed the more inflamed, and the more bent upon pouring on him all possible contempt. Mr. Norman then said, "Sir, you must 'ere long appear before a greater Judge, to give an account of your own actions, and to answer for railing at me, the servant of that great Judge." As he was going to Ilchester Gaol, the officers called at the High Sheriff's house. The lady of the mansion began to upbraid Mr. Norman, and after other words said, "Where is your God now, that he suffers you to be carried to prison?" Mr. Norman asked if she had a Bible in the house. "Yes (said she) we are

not so heathenish as to be without a Bible." He being importunate for one, a Bible was at last brought; and he read the following words: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause and execute judgment for me. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her who said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God? Mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire in the streets."*—The lady, struck with these solemn and affecting words, immediately retired, and the dealings of God with the family not long after made this circumstance remembered.†—After Mr. Norman's release, he continued preaching in private some years. He went occasionally to Bristol, and it was while he was on one of his journeys that he died. His age was about 40. Notwithstanding his sufferings, he retained an even temper to the last.

Works:—Cases of Conscience; to which an Account of him is prefixed by Mr. W. Cooper.—Christ's Commission-Officer; an Ordination Sermon.—Christ confessed (written in prison).—Family Governors exhorted to Family Godliness.

Mr. JOHN MOORE was born at Musbury, and had his grammar-learning at Colyton. At the usual age he went to Brasen Nose College, Oxford. Mr. John Prince, Vicar of Berry Pomeroy, (and author of the Worthies of Devon,) mentions him as his fellow-pupil, under Mr. T. Adams. Having had episcopal ordination, he officiated at Holnest and Long Burton, where he remained five years after Bartholomew Day, and yet was at length as much silenced by the Act of Uniformity as if he had been

* Micah vii. 8—10.

† A similar anecdote has been related in reference to Mr. Worts, an ejected minister in Norfolk.

ejected by it at first. Being intimate with several silenced ministers, he was by degrees convinced of his obligations to join them. But before he left the Church, he met with much trouble on account of his not practising a total conformity. During his abode at Ottery, he was employed in preaching to the people in the country round about, often to the great hazard of his person and of his life. However, he providentially escaped; and once very remarkably, when he fled hastily in the night in dreadful weather. A little before, his persecutors entered his house with great violence, and ran their swords through all the beds, in expectation either of discovering or destroying him. He had at this time seven children, one of whom, (afterwards his successor,) being very young, innocently asked his mother, on occasion of this alarm, whether they were not the Philistines? While at Ottery, his goods were once seized and publicly cried for sale; but nobody would buy them, and they were restored. He had the greatest respect shewn him while he continued here; the country people took the whole management of his little farm, besides doing many other acts of kindness.

He maintained an even, cheerful temper under all the hardships of the dark times, was very pleasant in conversation, and of a most peaceable spirit. He (with Mr. Weeks, of Bristol, and Mr. A. Sinclaire, who fled thither from Waterford, in Ireland, to escape the rage of the Papists, in the reign of King James) encouraged the ministers of Somerset first, and those of Devon afterwards, to assemble together in stated meetings, to maintain order, union, and peace. He diligently attended the assemblies in Somerset, and sometimes even in his old age travelled to those held in Exeter. He was afflicted many years with the stone. In his last painful sickness, his patience and serenity of mind were truly admirable. And so well was he fortified against what is to nature the most shocking, that few, if any, have been known to meet death with less concern, or a greater composure of spirit. He died Aug. 23, 1717, aged 75. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Batson, of Taunton. He

left two sons in the ministry among the Dissenters; one at Bridgwater, the other at Abingdon.

Works:—A Reformation Sermon at Bridgwater in 1698, on Rom. xiii. 8.—An Answer to Mr. Matthew Hold's Letters concerning the Gifts and Forms of Prayer.

Mr. MATTHEW TOWGOOD was the son of the celebrated Micaijah Towgood. He does not appear to have been settled as a Dissenting minister before he went to Bridgwater. Here he continued about six years; and on leaving the town he quitted the ministry, engaged in business, and subsequently became an eminent banker in London. It is to this gentleman that Mr. Manning alludes in the following paragraph in the life of his father: "In the month of January, 1791, the strength of his religious principles was severely tried by the death of his only son, Matthew Towgood, Esq., of London, in the sixtieth year of his age. He was a gentleman of distinguished public spirit and ardour of mind, and zealously engaged in various undertakings in which the advantage and honour of the Protestant Dissenters were concerned. The venerable parent had the satisfaction of seeing his son pass through the various scenes of life with great credit and usefulness, and close it as became the expectant of a better world; and he had still the comfort of observing his descendants filling useful and important stations in life, and entertaining the cheerful hope that there would be some, in future generations, who would inherit his principles, be zealous supporters of the cause of civil and religious liberty, and pillars in the house of God when he should be laid in the dust."* A late number of the Christian Reformer mentions the death, at Cardiff, on February 28, 1835, of William Towgood, Esq., aged seventy-six, one of the grandsons of the Rev. Micaijah Towgood, and himself an enlightened and zealous friend of civil and religious liberty.

* Manning's Life of Towgood, p. 84.

Mr. THOMAS WATSON was a native of Kettering, in Northamptonshire. He received the first part of his education at Kibworth, in Leicestershire, under Mr., afterwards Dr., Aikin. His studies for the ministry were superintended by Dr. Doddridge, in the Academy at Northampton. In the year 1748, he settled with a small congregation at Coleford, under the Mendip Hills,—a place associated in many liberal minds with the names and the labours of Billingsley, Stogdon, and Foster. Mr. Watson preached his farewell sermon at Coleford, August 3, 1755, and was ordained at Bridgwater Sept. 24, in the same year. Eight years afterwards he married Miss Mary Codrington, whose early death is noticed in the inscription in the preceding pages. Mrs. Watson left four children, the youngest of whom died in 1792; the others still survive. The subject of this memoir died on Tuesday, the fifth of March, 1793, having preached the preceding Lord's day with more than usual vigour. About eight o'clock on the Monday evening he was seized by palsy, and at half-past ten the next morning expired, universally lamented and universally respected.

The above particulars I have gathered from Mr. Watson's funeral sermon, by Dr. Toulmin. For those which follow I am indebted to the Gentleman's Magazine.

"His knowledge was extensive, and he had a particular fondness and taste for polite literature, especially for poetry. In his sentiments he was liberal, and that liberality was united with the most perfect candour towards those who differed from him. In the discharge of his pastoral duty he was constant, faithful, and affectionate; and his discourses eminently pathetic. His whole conduct as a minister of the gospel was such as to procure him the universal respect and regard of his congregation, and to render his loss deeply regretted. The esteem he was held in was not confined to his own society, or to persons of his own religious profession. In his private character he was amiable in the highest degree. None could excel him in the tenderness of his affections as a husband, and as a father. Be-

nevolence was the characteristic of his soul, and appeared in every circumstance of his life. All who knew him will testify to his simple and honest character, to his pious feeling and upright mind. In his friendships he was sincere and ardent, and one friend he had with whom he was invariably and most affectionately connected during a period of forty-nine years. That friend (Dr. Kippis) pays this unfeigned tribute of his esteem and love to his memory with an humble hope that their mutual friendship, though now interrupted by death, will not finally be broken, but revive in a better world."

TAUNTON.

"The river Tone, gliding through a succession of rich meads and pastures, imparts to a large district, forming one of the most beautiful dens or valleys in the county, the distinguishing appellation of *Taunton Dean*, whereon Drayton, in the third song of his Polyolbion, passes this encomium,

> 'What eare so empty is that hath not heard the sound
> 'Of *Taunton's* fruitful *Dean?* not matcht by any ground.'"

COLLINSON.

"The town stands on the great road leading from the Land's End in Cornwall to the north of England, lying between Exeter and Bridgwater, thirty-three miles north east of the former and eleven miles south of the latter. The situation rendering it the thoroughfare from Bristol and Bath to Exeter and Plymouth, it is enlivened with a continual succession of travellers.

"Taunton has ever been a principal town in the county of Somerset. Before the modern improvements were introduced it was deemed well built. Its streets are spacious, and as it spreads over a considerable extent of ground, the houses even in the middle of it, are generally furnished with good outlets and gardens.—TOULMIN.

Population in 1811,—6997; in 1821,—8534; in 1831,—11,139.

MARY STREET.

THE worshipers in this building are among the descendants of the two oldest Dissenting congregations in the town—the Baptist and the Presbyterian. A society of the former denomination existed here so long since as the year 1646, and was one of the numerous churches formed about that time in the county of Somerset.

Mr. Thomas Burgess was one of the earliest ministers; he is mentioned in Crosby's interesting list of "Baptist Ministers who remained steadfast though they were often imprisoned."* The following letter from Mr. Thomas Collier (who probably filled the office of messenger in the church, an office still maintained by the General Baptist Assembly,) illustrates the zeal and spirit of the denomination nearly two centuries ago.

To the Saints in the order and fellowship of the gospel in TAUNTON.

Your dear brother, THOMAS COLLIER, *desireth the increase of grace, and peace from God the Father and from our L^d* JESUS CHRIST.

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

I have not had an opportunity of writing unto you till now, altho' my spirit hath been up to the Lord for you

* Crosby's History of the Baptists, Vol. iii. p. 52. See also Appendix to Vol. i., containing the confession of faith of the Somersetshire churches.

continually. The Lord hath manifested his presence with me exceedingly in my journey. I desire the Lord to raise y hearts in thankfulness. He hath gathered saints in *Pool* by me. *Fourteen* took up the *ordinance* at once; there is like to be a great work, and I confirmed the churches in other places. I am not yet got so far as London; but I shall I expect to-morrow. Dearly beloved, my desire and prayer to our Father on your behalf is, that you may live above, and then y^r^ souls will not want comfort; and my exhortat^n^ to you is, to wait upon the Lord in his own way, and not to look forth into the world; there is bread enough in your Father's house; there he hath promised his presence. Tho' you seem to want gifts, yet you shall not want the presence of y^r^ Father, y^r^ Jesus, if you wait upon him. The *unlimited power* of the *Presbyter^s^* is denied them, of which you shall have more shortly. I desire to be remembered to all my friends with you, and at present rest

Your dear brother in the faith and fellowship of the gospel,
THOMAS COLLIER.

Gilford, Ap. 20, 1646.

I shall see you as speedily as possible I may.

The first Presbyterian society was formed soon after the passing of the Act of Uniformity. Its ministers were Mr. George Newton, ejected from St. Mary Magdalene's, Taunton, and Mr. George Hammond, from Trinity and St. Peter, Dorchester. In the year 1672 they built a meeting-house, but in the confusion which followed the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion, the seats, stairs, and galleries, were torn up and made into a bonfire. The building itself was allowed to remain, though not without an attempt to convert it into a workhouse.* In the

* Nonconformists' Memorial and Toulmin's History of Taunton, Savage's edition, in which see memoirs of all ministers of Paul's meeting.

year 1687, the Presbyterians of Taunton, whose zeal on behalf of a change in the government had meanwhile brought on them the most dreadful calamities, again assembled and chose as their pastors Mr. Emanuel Hartford and Mr. Matthew Warren. These gentlemen died in the year 1706, within two months of each other, and were succeeded by Mr. Edmund Batson, during whose ministry those members who inclined to Arianism, or had actually adopted it, seceded. It was also in the time of Mr. Batson that Mr. Grove and Mr. James conducted, at Taunton, their seminary for the education of young men for the ministry,—an institution which tended considerably to strengthen the Dissenting cause in the town and neighbourhood.*

The original congregation gradually acquired the appellation Independent, and continued to worship in the old meeting-house till the 1797, when the present spacious and handsome building called, like the first, "Paul's Meeting," was erected on the same site.†

* Mr. Grove died in 1737. In Paul's meeting there is a tablet to his memory, with a long latin inscription, giving a full account of his parentage, public offices, and character.—See TOULMIN's *History*.

† In reference to the connexion of the Taunton Nonconformists with the celebrated insurrection, I cannot refrain from quoting the following passage:—

"From Chard, Monmouth and his party proceeded to Taunton, a town where, as well for the tenour of former occurrences, as from the zeal and number of the Protestant Dissenters who formed a great portion of its inhabitants, he had every reason to expect the most favourable reception. His expectations were not disappointed. The inhabitants of the upper as well as of the lower classes, vied with each other in testifying their admiration for his person, and their zeal for his cause. While the latter rent the air with applauses and acclamations, the former opened their houses to him and to his followers, and furnished his army with necessaries

Of the history of the oldest society—the Baptists—there are but few particulars. The members of it built, and were, for a long time, the only worshipers in, the Mary Street chapel. Their first meeting-house was erected, at a very early period, near the spot on which the present building stands. The date of the latter is 1721; and its good size and handsome appearance indicate that the congregation, by whose unaided exertions it was built, was at that time numerous and wealthy. The roof is supported by two Corinthian pillars; the pulpit and stair-case are enriched with elegantly carved-work, and, as well as the fronts of the pews and galleries, made of Flemish oak. Before the chapel is an area 9 feet wide, and behind it a burial ground in which are interred the remains of some of the most respectable families in the town. Among the liberal supporters of the cause in the last century, were

and supplies of every kind. His way was strewed with flowers: the windows were thronged with spectators, all anxious to participate in what the warm feelings of the moment made them deem a triumph. Husbands pointed out to their wives, mothers to their children, the brave and lovely hero, who was destined to be the deliverer of his country. The beautiful lines which Dryden makes Achitophel in his highest strain of flattery, apply to this unfortunate nobleman were, in this instance, literally verified:

'Thee, Saviour, thee, the nation's vow confess,
'And never satisfied with seeing, bless,
'Swift unbespoken pomps thy steps proclaim,
'And stammering babes are taught to lisp thy name.'

In the midst of these joyous scenes, twenty-six young maids, of the best families in the town, presented him, in the name of their townsmen, with colours wrought by them for the purpose, and with a Bible, upon receiving which he said, that he had taken the field with a design to defend the truth contained in that book, and to seal it with his blood if there was occasion."—C. J. Fox's *History of the Reign of James the Second*, p. 229.

Mr. Samuel Noble and Mrs. Jane Noble; the former, in the year 1745, bequeathed to the congregation a valuable service of plate for the communion; the latter, in 1777, added to this legacy a pair of silver candlesticks with snuffers and dish.*

The Baptist congregation appears to have declined before the end of the last century. Nor did the talents and exertions of Dr. Toulmin and Mr. Job David, much as they were esteemed, produce a permanent revival. In Taunton, as in most places, where Dissenters abounded, the spirit of persecution raged during the French Revolution, and proved particularly detrimental to the cause of Unitarianism. Dr. Toulmin, we are told, "experienced unremitted insult and misrepresention. At one time Paine was burnt in effigy before his door, and but for the interference of particular friends, he himself would have undergone a similar fate. The house of an interested neighbour was so closely connected with his, that, to save himself, he employed all his influence to save the Doctor's premises from the devouring flames. But although the persecuting spirit was, in this instance, repelled, it succeeded, afterwards, in breaking the windows of his house in every direction in which they could be assailed. And even after he had been obliged, for the sake of peace, to quit his abode and consent to the relinquishment of a concern (the trade of a bookseller) in which Mrs. Toulmin had been long engaged, he was still insecure and was poisoned

* Toulmin's History of Taunton. Savage's Edition, p. 184.

with the bitterest rancour. One evening a large stone was aimed at his head, through the study window, where he was sitting, with an evident intention to strike a mortal blow. His agitation of spirits on this occasion was excessive, because the act manifested such determined malice. His bedroom windows were nightly beset; nor can any one say what fatal event would have occurred, if a professional friend had not taken up his cause, and, collecting a few more to assist him, watched these midnight foes, who finding they were thus watched, at length, through fear, desisted."* This extract shews the state of feeling in Taunton at the close of the last century.—It is not surprising that during the continuance of a "Church and King" reign of terror, the Baptist and Presbyterian Societies, whose sentiments had long been alike on points of the greatest importance, did not both flourish. So long

* Letter from Birmingham quoted by Rev. I. Worsley in his sermon on the death of Dr. Toulmin.

A friend of the author of this work thus writes, in reference to the history of the Taunton congregation at this period:—"I was there in the midst of the storm. Dr. Toulmin experienced the greatest persecution. Yet he fearlessly declared his political sentiments both in the pulpit and out of it. A little knot, whom the world called democrats, used to meet in the evening and talk upon these matters, and sometimes we played and sang '*Ca ira*' and the Marsellois hymn most enthusiastically,—but not the good Doctor."

"The very excellent and conscientious Mr. Ward, who had lately resigned his office as minister of the Presbyterian congregation, notwithstanding all his meekness and caution, and the high respect in which he was universally held, had his windows smashed because he would not put candles into them on the occasion of some victory obtained in the French War. When his good wife entreated him to comply with the custom, his answer manifested a more than usual determination not to deviate a hair's breadth from what he deemed the path of duty,—'My dear, dost thou think that I will damn my soul by so wicked a compliance?'"

as they continued separate, the chief if not the only ground of difference between them was the mode of administering Baptism, and this was wisely lost sight of in proportion as their opinions on other subjects became more decided and more unpopular. About two years after the retirement of Mr. David, the congregation in Mary Street chose a Pædobaptist minister, the Rev. H. Davies, LL. D., educated under Mr. Bretland, at Exeter, and at Manchester College, York. In the year 1814 a society of Calvinistic Baptists was formed in the town, to which all who have adopted their distinguishing ordinance have since attached themselves, under the pastoral care of the Rev. R. Horsey. These circumstances tended to lessen the desirableness of appropriating the chapel in Mary Street exclusively to the use of Baptists; and as the Presbyterian meeting-house in Tancred Street was about this time, 1815, in a ruinous condition, it was taken down, the site converted into a burial ground, and the two congregations united under the pastoral care of Dr. Henry Davies.

I have now to give some account of the Presbyterian congregation. It originated in a secession from Paul's meeting in 1732, soon after the appointment of Mr. Amory to assist old Mr. Batson. By Mr. Amory and his friends it was naturally expected that Mr. Batson would relinquish part of his salary, but this he refused to do, and, consequently, gave much dissatisfaction. The attachment to Mr. Amory, among those who expected the relinquish-

ment, was increased by the talents of that gentleman, his superior liberality on religious subjects, and the Christian candour with which he avowed his opinions. His friends soon built a new meeting-house in Tancred Street, where he officiated till his removal to London. It was a neat building 33 feet in front and 50 feet in depth, having an area before it planted with a row of lime trees. Here the worshipers of one God the Father were long favoured with the services of Mr. John Ward; and, after his removal, with those of Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Fenner. The reader will find a memoir of Mr. Ward in connexion with the history of the society at Yeovil. Mr. Broadhurst removed to Bath, where he still resides; he has had no ministerial charge since he resigned his office as Pastor of the congregation in that city. Mr. Fenner was born in London, baptized by Dr. Gibbons, educated at Daventry, and settled, first, at Bicester; second, at Chowbent; third, at Devizes; fourth, at Taunton; and, fifth, at Kenilworth; he died at Taunton, Nov. 1833, in the eighty-third year of his age. The Presbyterian society in Taunton was, at the time of its removal to Mary Street, highly respectable, and numbered among its members, a few of the most influential inhabitants of the town,—gentlemen who have long been distinguished for their adherence to the cause of civil and religious liberty, and their promotion of public and praiseworthy objects.

Twenty years have now elapsed since the congregations were united. No difference exists on doctrinal subjects; and the attendants at the chapel

are still numerous. In the year 1826 they subscribed six hundred pounds to repair and beautify their house of prayer and to erect an organ. At the same time they engaged a second minister, the Rev. T. W. Horsfield, of Lewes, and on the re-opening of the chapel commenced a regular Sunday evening service. A few months afterwards Dr. Davies retired altogether from the pulpit, and his friends elected, as his successor, the Rev. J. G. Teggin, who still conducts the services on one part of the Lord's day.

There are four tablets in the chapel with inscriptions to the memory of five members of the family of Noble; three of the family of Capon; Lieutenant R. Smith, nephew of Dr. Toulmin; and Mrs. Davies, the wife of Dr. Davies, minister of the congregation.

Ministers.

TANCRED STREET.

Thomas Amory	1732—1759.
John Ward	1759—1793.
Thomas Broadhurst	1793—1795.
John Ludd Fenner	1795—1815.

MARY STREET.

Thomas Whinnel	1688—1720.
Joseph Jeffries	1717—1746.
Richard Harrison, A.M.	1746—1764.
Joshua Toulmin, D.D.	1764—1803.
Job David	1803—1808.
Henry Davies, LL.D.	1810—1827.
T. W. Horsfield	1827—
J. G. Teggin	1828—

THOMAS WHINNEL was invited to Taunton from Bristol. He entered on the work of the ministry at the age of 22, and continued in it upwards of 40 years. His whole soul was engaged in saving and instructing his fellow-creatures; to do them good he willingly suffered persecutions, fines, and imprisonments. He betook himself early to the study of the Scriptures, and adhered to it to the last, by which means he became familiarly acquainted with the word of God. His religion, as he did not place it in little niceties and singularities, was far from bigotry or enthusiasm; nor did he think that it obliged him to a stiff starch behaviour, to a demure look, or an unsociable, sullen reserve; but an agreeable mixture of cheerfulness and gravity sat in his aspect. He was singularly seviceable to the town of Taunton and generally beloved. His mind was always calm and serene: especially did his peace abound when he came within view of death. Mr. Lucas, of Trowbridge, paid the usual tribute to his memory on the Sunday after his interment. He published one sermon, entitled "The Best Portion," preached at the funeral of Mrs. Mary Steed, in the city of Exon, November 16, 1699. 4to.*

JOSEPH JEFFRIES, a native of Taunton, was ordained co-pastor with Mr. Whinnel, in 1717. On the death of his colleague, he undertook the sole charge of the congregation, which he retained during the remainder of his life. He was remarkable for piety, zeal in promoting religion, and affability and liberality to the poor. Towards the close of his life, he was led by inquiry and reflection into a conviction that the Calvinistic sentiments he had to that time preached, were not authorized by the Scriptures. Nor did he rest satisfied with having altered his own views; he displayed his candour and integrity by an avowal from the pulpit of his change, and by his endeavours to lead his people into what he believed to be the truth. He

* Abridged from Toulmin's History of Taunton, p. 185.

died in the year 1746, and his funeral sermon was preached by his successor, the Rev. Richard Harrison. Mr. Jeffries was the father of Dr. Joseph Jeffries, some time pastor of the Baptist Church, Pinners' Hall, London, and professor of Civil Law at Gresham College.

RICHARD HARRISON was a native of the city of York, and the youngest of twelve children. His father was, for many years, a member of the Established Church and intended his eldest son for its ministry; but afterwards joined the Dissenters. Mr. Harrison was educated at the University of Edinburgh, and spent the first years of his public ministry, partly at Newington Green, when he was librarian at Dr. Williams's library; and partly at Colchester. He was afterwards minister of a Pædobaptist congregation at Oxford, whence he was driven by rudeness and bigotry. He then removed to Thame, though he had previously avowed his adoption of the practice of Adult Baptism, and the people liberally dispensed with the ministerial functions which he could not conscientiously perform. From Thame he removed to Moreton Hampstead and from that place to Bridgwater, whence he was invited to Taunton, where he continued eighteen years, till 1764, when he generously resigned to make room for Dr. Toulmin. Subsequently he lived at Nailsworth, Tewkesbury, Liverpool, and Leek, in Staffordshire, officiating in each place to a congregation of Pædobaptists, and obtaining a large share of respect and affection. At Leek he became incapacitated for public services by a paralytic stroke. He then returned to his native place, where he died in 1781, between seventy and eighty years of age. His publications were "A letter in the White-hall Evening Post, September 17, 1747, to the author of the Dissenting Gentleman's Letter to Mr. White," and in the same year "An Address to the President of the Foundling Hospital, signed Verax, on the subject of Infant Baptism." Though not popular as a preacher, his sermons were judicious and instructive; he was a man of the greatest simplicity and integrity, and constantly manifested

that charity which "thinketh no evil." So pure and strong were his virtuous affections that a gentleman who knew mankind said, he would rather have Mr. Harrison's heart than Lord Bacon's head.*

DR. TOULMIN.—No name is better entitled to a conspicuous and honourable place in the annals of Dissent than that of Dr. Toulmin. His zeal, judgment, acquirements, literary productions, ministerial services, amiable and truly Christian disposition, all prompt a more than common tribute to his memory. Anxious to do justice to so interesting a life, and so beautiful a character, which could only be faithfully delineated by those who were personally acquainted with them, I shall borrow largely from the language of his highly respected colleague.†

Joshua Toulmin was born in London, May 11, 1740. How much he owed to the care bestowed upon him by his parents, his own testimony expressed. Amidst a thousand blessings for which, in future life, he acknowledged his obligation to bow before the Father of mercies, he deemed this the first and greatest, that in youthful years he felt the power and was led to obey the dictates of religion. He was sent, for his classical education, to St. Paul's School, where he remained seven years. He was then removed to the academy under the charge of Mr. Jennings and Dr. Savage, the latter of whom was his relation. From the commencement of his studies, he combined a love of inquiry and a desire of courageously professing the truth with genuine modesty, candour, and devotion; though in exercising the invaluable privilege of a Christian, he had to encounter severe remonstrances from his father and mother as well as the displeasure of Dr. Jennings.

Mr. Toulmin's first settlement was at Colyton, in Devonshire, in 1761. To this place he carried the good wishes and advice

* The substance of this and the two preceeding memoirs is taken from Toulmin's History of Taunton.

† The Rev. J. Kentish. See Monthly Repository, Vol. x. p. 665.—I lament that I am obliged to abridge this valuable piece of biography.

of his friend Dr. Savage. Here also he formed some valuable friendships, particularly with Dissenters at Bridport and Exeter. In 1764, he married a daughter of Mr. Samuel Smith, of Taunton,—a connexion which proved one of his greatest sources of happiness. About this time, he became a decided advocate for Adult Baptism, and although his sentiments were always expressed with exemplary moderation, he found it necessary, in consequence of this change, to leave Colyton. In March 1765, he accepted an unanimous invitation from the Unitarian Baptist congregation at Taunton, to which he had been introduced, in the kindest and most disinterested manner, by Mr. Harrison. Here he spent nearly 39 years, greatly, and notwithstanding the spirit of persecution referred to in the history of the congregation, *generally* respected and beloved. For some time he was engaged in the instruction of youth. As early as 1769, he received the degree of Master of Arts from the Baptist College of Rhode Island and Providence, in New England; and in 1794, on the representation of Dr. Price, Dr. Priestley, and Mr. Lindsey, he was honoured with a diploma of Doctor in Divinity, by Harvard College, in the same state.

Nearly the last twelve years of Dr. Toulmin's life were spent at Birmingham, whither he removed in January, 1804, as one of the pastors of the New Meeting congregation. He had previously declined to accept invitations from Gloucester and Great Yarmouth, in consequence, on at least one occasion, of the importunity of his friends at Taunton, who entreated him to continue among them. At Birmingham, as in the scenes of his former ministry, he secured the cordial love of those who were blessed with his instructions and society, and the esteem and good will of men of different denominations. Here also, he manifested his accustomed diligence in advancing, both by his preaching and his pen, what he regarded as the cause of Christian truth, liberty, and virtue. At the commencement of the year 1815, Dr. Toulmin began to experience some of the infirmities of age, and signified his intention of resigning his pastoral charge; but he was assured, in a manner exceedingly

gratifying to his feelings, of the very high place he held in the esteem and affection of his friends. In June, he returned from a long visit to London, where he had been engaged in collecting materials for an historical work, attending the anniversary meetings of several religious bodies of which he was a member, and deriving from interviews with his friends, the exquisite satisfaction which a mind particularly susceptible of kind and social affections never fails, on such occasions, to receive. His last illness, though it found him well prepared, was not anticipated so soon After a confinement of scarcely two days he sunk, rapidly and suddenly, under his complaint—an affection of the lungs, and expired July 23rd. When the power of speech had fled, he was observed by a member of his family, who incessantly watched and tenderly loved him, to be engaged in mental prayer, and his looks and manner clearly signified the holy gratitude, peace and hope, which reigned within his breast.

The remains of this most venerable and exemplary Christian were interred in the burial ground belonging jointly to the members of the Old and New Meetings.* The congregation of the latter, in the kindest manner, undertook the management and expense of the funeral; but after their arrangements were made it was found that Dr. Toulmin had himself written directions on the subject. It was his wish—a wish so characteristic of his amiable temper, that "his pall should be supported by six ministers of different denominations." Among those who complied were the Rev. John Kennedy, of the Church of England, and the Rev. J. A. James, an eminent Independent minister. The coffin was carried into the meeting-house, and to the grave, by eight of "the ancient members of the church which Dr. Toulmin served in the ministry," to each of whom and to each of the servants employed on the occasion, was presented, agreeably to his desire, "a copy of Mr. Orton's discourses on Eternity, over and above the usual gratuity." Several members of the family followed as mourners. Dr. Toulmin had twelve children, but only five survived him. The service was conduct-

* Monthly Repository, x. 523.

ed by Mr. Kentish, himself a deeply afflicted mourner, who also delivered the funeral sermon, on the Lord's day following, from 2 John, 8, a passage from which the deceased desired that his "dear and respected people" might be addressed on the occasion.* Funeral sermons were also preached in various parts of the kingdom, particularly at Essex Street, London, by Mr. Belsham; at the Old Meeting, Birmingham, by Mr. Kell; at Bridport, by Mr. Howe; at Bristol, by Mr. Rowe; at Cosely, by Mr. Small; at Coventry, by Mr. Davis; at Cradley, by Mr. Scott; at Dudley, by Mr. Bransby; at Exeter, by Dr. Carpenter; at Taunton, the pulpit being covered with black cloth, by Mr. Fenner and Mr. Davies; at Walsall, by Mr. Bowen; and at Wolverhampton, by Mr. Steward. "He was a burning and a shining light, and they were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."

As a writer, Dr. Toulmin was well known to the public. His numerous works may be classed under the heads of biography, history, controversy, practical religion, and devotion. They bear the marks of great industry and good sense, as well as of that methodical arrangement of his time and thoughts which enabled him to carry on a very extensive correspondence in addition to his stated labours. And while they further exhibit the compass of his reading, in his favourite departments of study, and the ardour of his mind in the noblest of all designs, they present in their eminently pious and benevolent spirit a distinction before which every other excellence fades away. As a minister, Dr. Toulmin was generally admired. His strain of preaching was practical, devotional, scriptural, and, in the just sense of the word, *evangelical*. He was no friend to merely moral disquisitions, or to scholastic reasonings, or to speculations on points which confessedly are no parts of Revelation; but he thought that a Christian preacher should discourse on passages of the Bible, by illustrating their connexion and import, and then drawing from them natural and pertinent reflections. He felt pleasure in recommending Unitarian views of the Gospel; these

* Monthly Repository, x. 523.

the continued inquiries of fifty-four years served to confirm; his habits were formed under their influence; and by his example, even more than by his writings, their *practical efficacy* was demonstrated. To the virtues of Dr. Toulmin it would be difficult to do justice. In the scale of moral and religious worth he stood high by the suffrages of all who had opportunities of estimating his character. He was not only distinguished by integrity, independence, fidelity, gentleness, the most exemplary self-government, and the kindest consideration for others; but it was evident that all these qualities arose from his piety and Christian faith. That piety, never ostentatious, but habitually energetic, was manifested not only in the fervour with which he conducted social worship and in his administration of religious ordinances, but in the whole course of his life,—in the activity of his youth and manhood, in the serenity of his age, and especially in his resignation to the Divine will,—his cheerful, thankful spirit under heavy trials. No common wound was inflicted on his heart by the loss of promising and amiable children. Still, whatever were the feelings of the man and the father, the principles and hopes of the Christian were unspeakably stronger; his eye was fixed on immortality.

A list of Dr. Toulmin's numerous works may be seen in the Monthly Repository, Vol. x. p. 670. They are arranged under their respective heads, and amount altogether to fifty-eight, exclusive of contributions to periodical works.

JOB DAVID was born at Newton Nottage, Glamorganshire, in 1746. His father was a Baptist minister, of high character, at Pen-y-fai, near Bridgend. The son having been baptized was sent, in 1766, to the Academy at Bristol, conducted by Messrs. Hugh and Caleb Evans, both then in the zenith of their reputation. Here he remained five years; after officiating some time at Pen-y-fai, he was chosen to succeed Mr. Ledgfield at Frome, in Somersetshire, where he was ordained Oct. 7, 1773. When he had lived at Frome thirty years, he removed to Taunton, where he officiated till his ill health obliged him to retire with

his family to Swansea. In the spring of 1813, he was attacked by a severe illness, and he soon afterwards expired in a very resigned and pious frame of mind. He was interred at Pen-y-fai in a vault belonging to the family. On the following Sunday, two funeral sermons were preached at Swansea, one in Welsh by the Rev. T. Jenkins, the other in English by the Rev. R. Evans, at the Presbyterian chapel. Five small publications on controversial subjects proceeded from Mr. David's pen, a list of which is given in the memoir from which this sketch is taken.*

THOMAS AMORY, D. D.—Dr. Amory was born at Taunton, in 1700-1. The first part of his education was received from Mr. Chadwick, a Dissenting minister there. In 1717, he accompanied Micaijah Towgood, who had been his schoolfellow, to the Academy of Messrs. James and Grove. He was examined and approved as a candidate for the ministry in 1722; but, being desirous of still further improvement, he spent a short time in attending a course of experimental philosophy under Mr. Eames, an eminent Dissenting tutor in Moorfields.

Until the year 1730, Mr. Amory preached once a month as an assistant at Lambrook, near South Petherton, and at West Hatch and Bishop's Hull, near Taunton. He also took a part in the instruction of the pupils at the Academy after the death of Mr. James, in conjunction with his uncle and former tutor, Mr. Grove. In 1730, he was ordained at Paul's Meeting, Taunton, and united in the congregation there with Mr. Batson; but in consequence of some pecuniary misunderstanding, another meeting-house was built for Mr. Amory and his friends in 1732. Six years afterwards, on the death of Mr. Grove, he became chief tutor of the Academy,—an office which he filled with great success, and for which he was fitted by his zeal, integrity, and extensive attainments.

Mr. Amory was very happy and highly respected at Taunton; but the prospect of being more useful induced him to become

* Toulmin's History, Savage's Edit.

afternoon preacher at the Old Jewry, London, in 1759. This office he exchanged for that of pastor on the death of Dr. Chandler, and in 1770 he added to his other important duties those of a colleague with Dr. Price as morning preacher at Newington Green. But his ministry was not so popular in London as it had been in the country, which is ascribed partly to his philosophical style of preaching, and partly to his possessing liberal religious opinions. He had previously received, by diploma from the University of Edinburgh, the degree of Doctor in Divinity, and been elected one of the six Tuesday lecturers at Salters' Hall. Dr. Amory was in advance of most of his Presbyterian brethren on many important and interesting subjects. Although his preaching was generally practical, he sometimes exposed with earnestness the doctrines of Calvinism, as conveying narrow and unworthy ideas of the Creator. He also rejected the doctrine of the Trinity as decidedly unscriptural; but he maintained his opinions with the utmost candour, and cherished the sincerest affection for those who differed from him. The right of private judgment was one which he held to be particularly sacred. Disapproving of subscription to human formulas, he refused to comply with that part of the Toleration Act which required Dissenting ministers to subscribe to certain doctrinal articles. And when an attempt was made in 1772 to procure an enlargement of that statute, he joined in it most cordially, with the conviction that it was founded not only upon principles of natural justice, but also on those of genuine Christianity.

Although Dr. Amory was not popular as a preacher, there is reason to suppose he was useful. His sermons were accurate, solid, and affectionate, and his devotional services remarkable for their seriousness and fervour. He published many sermons, both separately and in volumes; a few devotional works; Mr. Grove's System of Moral Philosophy, in two vols.; and other less important productions. His writings indicate a polished, vigorous, and well stored mind, as well as an earnest desire to diffuse sound knowledge on all the great questions of

religion and morality. His piety was at the same time rational and fervent, founded on the most enlarged sentiments concerning the Divine Government, and therefore displayed in a spirit of cheerful devotion, love, and confidence. "It was a principle (continues Dr. Kippis*) that influenced his whole behaviour; a principle that rendered him strictly virtuous in every respect, and peculiarly amiable in all the relations of life. None could excel him as a husband, a father, a master, and a friend."

He retained his capacity of usefulness until within a short time of his death, which occurred on the 24th of June, 1774, in the seventy-fourth year of his age. On the morning of the day on which his short illness commenced, he conversed with his family on his favourite subject of immortality, and dwelt on the pleasing surprise with which he should hereafter meet, unspeakably improved, a beloved and amiable daughter whom he had lately lost. He was interred in Bunhill Fields; his colleague, Mr. White, delivered the oration, and his friend Dr. Flexman, of Rotherhithe, preached his funeral sermon. The following just and beautiful inscription appears upon his tomb-stone:

HERE IS DEPOSITED THE BODY OF
THOMAS AMORY,
WHO, AFTER HAVING BEEN EMPLOYED FOR MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS
IN HUMBLY ENDEAVOURING TO DISCOVER
THE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST
IN ITS ORIGIN AND PURITY,
AND IN ENDEAVOURING TO RECOMMEND IT
TO THE FAITH AND PRACTICE OF MANKIND,
RESTS FROM HIS LABOURS,
AND RESIGNED HIS SPIRIT
INTO THE HANDS OF THE FATHER OF SPIRITS
AND THE FATHER OF MERCIES,
IN HUMBLE HOPE OF ACCEPTANCE AND ETERNAL LIFE
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

* Quoted by Wilson, Diss. Churches, Vol. ii. p. 391, where a more particular account of the life of Dr. Amory may be seen, with a complete list of his works.

YEOVIL.

YEOVIL is a large and populous town, situated in the great western road from London to Exeter, being distant four miles south from Ivelchester, nine east from Chard, and six west from Sherborne.

The town is pleasantly situated, being defended from the north, by a range of high hills finely cultivated. The surface of the surrounding country is pleasingly diversified and well wooded.

There was formerly a large manufacture of woollen cloth; but now the principal one is of leather gloves, in which a great number of hands are constantly employed.—COLLINSON.

Population in 1811,—3118; in 1821,—4655; in 1831,—5921.

VICARAGE STREET CHAPEL.

THE town of Yeovil is interesting on account of its various religious antiquities. For many years after the Conquest the manor was vested in the successive rectors of the parish. In 1418, Henry the Fifth granted it, together with the rectory, to the Abbot and Convent of the Virgin Mary and St. Bridget, which he had founded at Sion, in Middlesex. On the dissolution of that monastery, Henry the Eighth granted the whole to his consort Queen Catherine; and from that time it continued in the crown till the reign of James the First, who gave it to two private individuals. The extent of the ecclesiastical establishments in Yeovil may be imagined from the fact that, in 1449, one hundred and seventeen houses were destroyed by fire, among which were fifteen belonging to the chantry of the Holy Trinity, founded *in* the parish church; eleven belonging to the chantry of the Virgin Mary, without the church; nineteen belonging to another chantry of the Virgin Mary, within the church, and two belonging to the alms-house.*

Notwithstanding the changes which had taken

* Collinson's History of Somersetshire, Vol. iii. p. 203.

place in ecclesiastical property, prior to the year 1662, the income and influence of the vicar of Yeovil at that time were considerable. But Henry Butler, the noble-minded man who then enjoyed them, esteemed liberty of conscience far more, and willingly gave up his living rather than comply with the terms of the Act of Uniformity. To him the Unitarian congregation owes its origin; and it is worthy of remark, that a few of the most useful of the present members are his lineal descendants. His profession at all hazards of what he deemed to be the truth, and his repeated sufferings for conscience' sake, appear to have produced an attachment to the great principles of religious liberty which has been handed down from generation to generation, to the present time.

Mr. Butler, after his ejectment, had many adherents, among whom he continued his ministry. For twenty-six years they held their meetings irregularly, in consequence of the severe enactments against Nonconformity. The village of Compton, near Yeovil, was the place to which Mr. Butler and his friends most frequently resorted. Many were the precautions they were obliged to adopt before they could assemble to worship their Creator in spirit and in truth. And yet the little flock were severely persecuted, both minister and people having been on various trifling pretexts thrown into Ilchester gaol, tried at the assizes, and forced to pay heavy fines. This state of things continued till the passing of the Toleration Act, by which the people were

enabled to hire a house or room in the town of Yeovil. Still Mr. Butler found his situation dangerous, and at length removed to a place near Frome, where he became pastor of another Dissenting congregation. Here his zeal burned with the same ardour;—"no danger from enemies, weather, or indisposition of body, hindered him from meeting his people, in private houses or in Sir Edward Seymour's woods, as was thought most safe." Though he had only twenty pounds per annum, nothing would tempt him to leave his people. He died in 1696, aged 72, and his last words were, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."*

After Mr. Butler's removal, the congregation at Yeovil were some time without a pastor. About the year 1700, they chose Mr. Bartlett, who had been ejected from Compton, but was still officiating in that village. In 1704 they purchased the ground on which their temporary place of worship stood, and erected a new meeting-house. It was originally the site of the chantry dedicated to the Virgin Mary, already mentioned as without the church. The deed by which this property was secured to the congregation bears date May 30th, 1704.† At this period, and till his death in 1710, Mr. Bartlett divided his labours between Compton and Yeovil every Lord's Day. He also was exposed to a series of harassing persecutions by the neighbouring magistrates. Yeovil being in one county and Compton in another, he sometimes eluded their warrants for

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. ii. p. 338. † Gospel Advocate, Vol. i. p. 349.

his apprehension. On one occasion, the justices of both places combined to silence him; but even this scheme did not answer. Mr. Bartlett, supported by a Higher Power, was enabled to preserve both his integrity and his safety, and saw his two churches flourish under his care. Two memorials of his ministry in Yeovil still remain. One is a monument which was originally within the chapel, but is now outside, near the entrance; it bears a Latin inscription, in which honourable mention is made of his talents and virtues. The other is a copy of Mr. Baxter's works, with the following words on the cover:

"Mr. Baxter's works in 4
Volumes: the gift of I. T.,
Citizen of London, to
Mr. Ed. Bartlett, minister in
Yeovill, and on his decease
to his successor in the
ministry there.
Ano. Dom. 1708."

Mr. Bartlett was succeeded by Dr. Lobb, and Dr. Lobb by Dr. Milner. Of both these ministers, as well as of their predecessors, distinct memoirs will be given. Dr. Milner quitted Yeovil in 1744, and was followed by Mr. John Glass, who removed from Collumpton and remained at Yeovil six years. The next minister was Mr. John Ward, well-known in the West of England as the pastor, for many years, of the Presbyterian congregation at Taunton. On his removal to that town, in 1759, the Yeovil people elected Mr. Samuel Thomas. This gentleman settled here soon after he finished his acade-

mical studies at Carmarthen, and continued much respected till 1767. He then accepted an invitation to succeed Dr. John Leland, as colleague with Dr. Isaac Weld, in the care of the Presbyterian congregation, Eustace Street, Dublin.*

We now come to Mr. Samuel Perrot, who had also been educated at the Carmarthen Academy, of which his father, the Rev. Thomas Perrot, was many years the President. Before he went to Yeovil he officiated successively at Frome and Devizes, and after remaining here two years removed to Cork, at which place he was minister till his death in 1796. Mr. Perrot's successor here was Mr. David Graham, whose name occurs in a list of Dr. Doddridge's students† at Northampton, where he is said to have entered in the year 1746. When he had completed his academical course, he settled at Tewkesbury, and some years afterwards became the minister of this society; here he ended his labours and his life, in 1778, aged 46. He was followed by Mr. James Marshall, a pupil of Dr. Rees and Dr. Kippis, at Hoxton; he soon left Yeovil, gave up the ministry, and devoted himself to literary pursuits in the metropolis. Of his successor, Mr. Howel, I have given some account in the histories of other congregations.

* Mr. Thomas died at Dublin, in 1786, in his 48th year. His funeral sermon was preached by his colleague, Mr. Philip Taylor, the son-in-law and successor of Dr. Weld. This discourse, which was afterwards published, conveys a high opinion of the mental and moral qualities of Mr. Thomas. See also an interesting account of the Dublin ministers, in an appendix to the services on the ordination of the Rev. James Martineau.

† Mon. Repos., Vol. x. p. 687.

The notice of this gentleman brings us to the end of the last century. Prior to his removal, the numbers of this society were greatly reduced. This may be ascribed to various causes, but more particularly to the formation of other Dissenting churches and the increasing unpopularity of Unitarianism. It appears that as early as 1722 the Presbyterians at Yeovil had a minister of "heterodox" sentiments. We know not how far Dr. Milner departed from the standard of orthodoxy, but his sermon at the ordination of Mr. Amory was unusually liberal. There is reason to suppose that all the subsequent ministers have been Anti-trinitarians;—some were generally considered Arians; three or four agreed with Mr. Lindsey and Dr. Priestley. It was during the excitement occasioned by the persecution of the latter that the Yeovil congregation most rapidly declined. After Mr. Howel's removal, Mr. Blake, of Crewkerne, preached here about a year, and Mr. Tomline, of Northamptonshire, also a short time. The meeting-house was then closed for several years; but in 1801 it was re-opened by the Rev. Samuel Fawcett, who consented to become the minister; and from this period the prospects of the society gradually brightened. This venerable man is the son of the Rev. B. Fawcett, of Kidderminster, who was the editor of Baxter's "Saint's Everlasting Rest" and a warm admirer of that prince of Puritans. The visitor at Mr. Fawcett's picturesque residence near Yeovil, is reminded of these incidents by original and striking

portraits of Mr. Baxter and Mr. Benjamin Fawcett. The subject of this sketch was educated at Daventry, under Dr. Ashworth, and was for some time a fellow-student of the late Mr. Belsham, like whom he was originally of Calvinistic sentiments. More than fourscore winters have now passed over his head; he retains as firm a conviction as ever of the truth of his principles, and feels as powerfully as ever their inestimable value.

In the year 1809, the old meeting-house was taken down and the present erected on the same site. This building is rather small, and has a greater appearance of antiquity than might have been expected. The singing is conducted, with the assistance of a small organ, on a few benches, between the doors and opposite the pulpit, elevated, like the latter, a little above the pews. At the opening of this chapel, November 8, 1809, Mr. Butcher, of Sidmouth, preached in the morning, on John iv. 23, 24, and Mr. Howe, of Bridport, in the evening, on 1 Tim. i. 1, 2. Most of the pews in the new building had been previously taken by persons who had not been in the habit of attending Unitarian worship.*

Seven years afterwards Mr. Fawcett relinquished the pastoral office, in consequence of ill health, and was succeeded by Dr. Southwood Smith, whose valuable publications, both on Theology and Medicine, are well known. Few books have been more extensively read and admired, by those who are

* Mon. Repos., Vol. v. p. 101.

anxious to possess cheering views of the Deity, than Dr. Smith's Illustrations of the Divine Government. This gentleman left Yeovil, in 1820, in order to devote himself more closely to the medical profession, of which he is now an ornament in the metropolis. The congregation were then served, a short time, by Mr. John Owen, from the York College, who removed to Tamworth, in Warwickshire, where he now resides. He was succeeded by Mr. David Hughes, who continued here eleven years. In 1830 the congregation were encouraged, by liberal offers of pecuniary assistance, to build a house for the minister on ground belonging to the society, and situated at a short distance from the town; but before the abode was finished, Mr. Hughes removed to America, for the purpose of providing more satisfactorily for his family. Of the present circumstances of the society an opinion may be formed from an account, in a useful work published monthly at Exeter,* of a recent congregational meeting. At this meeting a report was read, from which it appeared that the attendance at the chapel had considerably increased, that the library and Sunday-school were in a satisfactory state, and that much interest had been excited by a course of lectures by the present minister, Mr. Jenkins, on Natural and Revealed Religion.

* The Gospel Advocate, Vol. i. p. 323.

Ministers.

Henry Butler	1662—
Robert Bartlett.....	1700—1710.
Theophilus Lobb, M. D.	1713—1722.
John Milner, D. D.	1722—1744.
Robert Glass	1746—1752.
John Ward.....	1752—1759.
Samuel Thomas.....	1759—1767.
Samuel Perrot.....	1768—1770.
David Graham	1770—1778.
James Marshall	1778—1781.
John Howel	1783—1793.
Samuel Fawcett	1801—1816.
T. Southwood Smith, M. D.	1816—1820.
John Owen...	1820—1821.
David Hughes	1821—1832.
John Jenkins.....	1832.

Edward Bartlett.*—The account of Mr. Bartlett's introduction to the ministry may be given in his own words. Having been summoned to appear before a court of justice, to answer a frivolous charge of sedition, he was asked by what authority he preached; he answered, "I am ordained to the ministry, and woe is me if I preach not the gospel!" and he uttered the last words with such solemn seriousness, that the justices were surprised and for a while continued silent. At length one of them asked him whether he had been ordained by a bishop; he

* This minister is called Robert Bartlett in the Nonconformists' Memorial, but from the inscription on Mr. Baxter's works it appears that his name was Edward or Edmund, probably the former.

replied, "There was no bishop at that time, but I was ordained by laying on of the hands of the Presbytery."

Mr. Bartlett first preached as a lecturer at Old Sarum, in 1652. After filling this office two years, he removed to Over Compton, where he discharged his pastoral duties till 1662. He afterwards removed to Bradford, a neighbouring parish, and occasionally preached to some of his affectionate adherents in a private house. When he had been here three years, the Five-mile Act obliged him to go farther off, and he went to Cadbury, where he lived with his family about twenty years, privately exercising his ministry till the passing of the Toleration Act, when he took up his abode at Lower Compton. The remainder of his history is given in the account of the congregation. He is said to have been a judicious, learned man, of the congregational persuasion, but very moderate and of a healing spirit. He was humble in his deportment; a plain, affectionate, popular preacher; and took great pains to speak to the capacities of his hearers. When he had liberty to preach publicly and according to his own mind, his plan was to begin with a short speech of five or six minutes, in order to solemnize the minds of the people; and they were all so desirous of hearing it, that the whole congregation was generally present before he began.*

THEOPHILUS LOBB, M.D., F.R.S., was born in London, in the year 1678. His father, the Rev. Stephen Lobb, was many years pastor of an Independent congregation in the metropolis. His grandfather was High Sheriff of Cornwall, and, in the year 1659, M.P. for St. Michael's, in that county. By his mother's side he was descended from two ejected ministers, the Rev. Theophilus Polwhele, of Tiverton, her father, and the Rev. William Benn, of Dorchester, her grandfather. Mr. Lobb pursued his studies for the ministry, first under Mr. Payne, at Saffron Walden, and afterwards at Pinner, in Middlesex, under

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 463.

the Rev. Thomas Goodwin. From his childhood he had also an inclination to the study of physic, and took every opportunity of cultivating that science. In 1702 he settled as a Dissenting minister in the town of Guildford, where he met with an eminent practitioner in physic, who was very friendly, and from whom he derived much instruction. About this time he married Frances, daughter of Dr. Cook, a physician in the West of England, and a descendant of the famous Sir Walter Raleigh.

After residing four years at Guildford, Mr. Lobb removed to Shaftesbury, where he continued six years, and began to practise as a physician. From thence, about the year 1713, he removed to Yeovil. On this occasion he entered into a covenant with God, which he wrote at length, copying it chiefly from Shower's Character of a Real Christian. This he renewed several times afterwards. His residence at Yeovil was remarkable for the prosperity which attended his worldly circumstances, and the success and reputation he acquired as a physician. He also greatly prospered in his religious concerns. In his diary he takes particular notice of the various mercies for which at this period he had reason to be thankful.

Dr. Lobb quitted Yeovil in 1722, and settled at Witham, in Essex. In the former place his health was not good, and there were differences in his congregation respecting singing; one party being for the introduction of new tunes, and the other against it. As both blamed him in the affair, though he acted with much caution, his situation was far from pleasant.

It was in the course of the same year that he received from Glasgow a diploma, creating him Doctor of Physic. After continuing ten years at Witham, Dr. Lobb removed to London, in consequence of an invitation from the society at Haberdashers' Hall. At the time of his settlement with this people, they were much reduced in number; and his ministry did not tend to revive them. In 1734 the congregation was dissolved; and he then, with the advice of several of his brethren, applied wholly to the practice of physic. Even when he resided at Yeovil, he

met with such success as a medical man, that it was predicted the Doctor would spoil the Divine, and that he would eventually give up the ministry. He declares, however, that he was not conscious to himself of the least inclination, at any time, to relinquish his sacred calling, for the sake of any worldly advantage; and that when an end was put to his exercise of the pastoral office, by the breaking up of his congregation, it was a source of deep regret to him.

It was supposed by some, that on his giving up the ministry he would consult his interest by conforming to the Church of England. But he was firmly resolved to continue a Dissenter, and joined the Independent church in New Court, Carey Street, under the care of the Rev. Thomas Bradbury. During his residence in the country, Dr. Lobb published several pieces with a view to promote the practice of religion, and after his removal to London, he gave to the world various books upon medical subjects.* His life was prolonged to the age of fourscore and five. He retained nearly to the last all his faculties unimpaired. About a month before his death he was rather low-spirited; upon which he remarked, "I know not what should be the reason of it: my good Master will not let his old servant want for any thing in this world, and I have a well-grounded hope through grace of being happy in the other." He died May the 19th, 1763, and his remains were interred in Bunhill Fields.

JOHN MILNER, D. D. — This learned divine was born in 1688. His academical studies were pursued under the Rev. John Moore, at Bridgwater. It is not known where he spent the first years of his ministry, but about 1722 he settled at Yeovil; here he conducted a large and respectable school. In 1729, he published a Latin Grammar; in 1732, a Greek Grammar; and in 1736, a Treatise on Rhetoric. In addition to these he gave the world several other works, arising out of his

* A list of these and other particulars of the life of Dr. Lobb may be found in Wilson's History, Vol. iii. p. 147.

employment as a schoolmaster, all evincing an extensive acquaintance with the learned languages. In 1730, Dr. Milner delivered at Taunton a discourse at the ordination of Mr. Amory, in which he inculcated the most candid and enlightened sentiments. In 1741 he accepted an invitation to become pastor of a congregation at Peckham, near London. To this place he also transferred his school, which continued to enjoy a high reputation: at one period he had the celebrated Oliver Goldsmith for his usher. In these employments Dr. Milner continued till his death, June 24th, 1757. He published several single sermons, and a small volume of discourses addressed to the poor.*

JOHN WARD was born at Coleshill, in Warwickshire, about the year 1712. His father was a mercer in that town, but obliged to remove by the odium against him on account of his Whig principles. He was also connected with the celebrated Daniel De Foe, and is said to have suffered in his fortune in consequence of the ill success of that author's plans.

The son, then very young, was taken into the house of a pious and worthy aunt. For the commencement of his classical education he was indebted to the Rev. Julius Saunders, of Bedworth, and the Rev. Edward Brodhurst, of Birmingham. He studied for the ministry under Dr. Latham, at Findern, where he formed an acquaintance with Dr. Johnson and Mr. Garrick; the latter called on him, many years afterwards, at Taunton.

Mr. Ward's first settlement was at Witney. During his residence there, the rebellion of 1745 broke out; and he was one of those who, being alarmed for the safety of the House of Hanover, bore arms as a soldier. In 1747 we find him pursuing his own proper and peaceful profession in the metropolis, as pastor of a congregation in Maid Lane, Southwark. Here he remained till 1752, when the reduced state of the society

* Wilson.

determined them to dissolve; and having declined an offer to become a colleague with Dr. Chandler, at the Old Jewry, Mr. Ward accepted an invitation from Yeovil. Lastly, he was induced, in 1759, on Dr. Amory's removal to London, to succeed him at the New Meeting in Taunton. Here he officiated thirty-three years. His increasing infirmities led him to relinquish the ministry in 1792, and five years afterwards he died, at the advanced age of eighty-four.

The talents and character of Mr. Ward are mentioned in high terms. Dr. Doddridge, Dr. Chandler, and Dr. Toulmin, all testify to the excellence both of his head and heart. With a considerable natural genius, a tenacious memory, and a sound judgment, he was a diligent reader, and an agreeable companion. His sermons were solid and comprehensive; his prayers, whether public or domestic, most excellent, always the fervent effusions of a spirit habitually devout. "Frequently (says his biographer*) have I been struck and affected with his propriety and energy, and yet conciseness, in that act of devotion which should *seriously* accompany the repast of our table, but which is generally performed in the most thoughtless and cursory manner." But the most prominent feature of his character was integrity. Having formed his opinions carefully, he invariably acted upon them at all hazards, whether in connexion with political, religious, or social affairs. We have seen that he had the moral courage to blend the character of a soldier with that of a minister of the gospel, when he deemed the interests of liberty at stake. By the same rule he was led in after life to avoid most scrupulously the slighest evasion of a national impost; and though disposed to reprobate particular measures which required new taxes, he contended that *all* existing laws in reference to the revenue should be obeyed. With regard to religious concerns he was peculiarly under the influence of this principle of uprightness. During his academical course he set no bounds to his inquiries, and fearlessly followed Truth wherever she led him, which was often far from the paths of

* Dr. Toulmin. See P. D. M., Vol. iv. p. 241.

Calvinism, in which his childhood had been spent. In the pulpit he cautiously refrained from using phrases calculated to convey erroneous ideas; nor would he allow himself to be present, on any occasion, where he knew a Trinitarian doxology would be offered. Often was he disposed to praise God for the light which had been diffused, in his time, by the examples of upright inquirers. Dr. Priestley and Mr. Lindsey he held in the highest estimation, and from their writings he derived great gratification and improvement. Mr. Ward had a dread of adding to the institutions of Christianity; hence his refusal to officiate on Christmas Day and the Fifth of November, and hence his objection to funeral services, which he expressly prohibited in the case of Mrs. Ward, and afterwards in his own, as having no precedent in scripture, and being a relic of the doctrine of purgatory. Some of these scruples may appear unwise, but the principle from which they emanated demands high admiration; and when exercised with that humility for which the subject of this memoir was conspicuous, it cannot fail to render the Christian useful, respected, and beloved, happy both in life and in death.

DAVID HUGHES was the son of a venerable minister of the same name, once settled at Wincanton, and a brother of the Rev. John Hughes, long minister at Honiton. For many years he devoted himself to business, at Kingsbridge, in Devonshire, and possessed considerable reputation on account of his mechanical and scientific attainments. Becoming unsuccessful, and having a good share of theological knowledge, a deep conviction of the importance of religion, and an earnest desire to do good, he directed his attention to the Christian ministry. In the year 1821 he received an invitation from Yeovil, and accordingly removed thither with a large family. Here he laboured zealously: his pulpit and pastoral services were much valued, and he was highly respected by his brethren in the district. However, in 1832 he was induced to emigrate to America, by the

hope of finding in that country those means of providing for his large family which he could not procure in his native land.

Mr. Hughes left England about the end of May, and reached Montreal after a voyage of nine weeks. The period of his arrival was one of the greatest distress in this part of Canada, in consequence of the devastation produced by the ravages of the cholera. Such was the state of the town, that accommodation could only be obtained for the travellers by the active interposition of a gentleman to whom Mr. Hughes made himself known, and whose kindness to him and his family was most invaluable. Mr. Teulon, the friend to whom we refer, immediately made known the arrival of an Unitarian minister to other Unitarians in Montreal; the strongest interest was immediately excited, and several merchants and their ladies called on him to offer every assistance in furthering his views. A deputation also waited on him to solicit a service on the following Lord's Day; he assented; for some particular reason they then requested him to preach on a given text—"Christ and him crucified"—to this he also assented; on which they applied at the whole round of chapels for the use of a pulpit, but were uniformly repulsed. They then obtained permission to use a school-room, where Mr. Hughes addressed about eighty Unitarians, with such acceptance that they determined, if possible, to fix him with them; they immediately subscribed £60 for fitting up a store-room, capable of acccommodating one hundred persons, and negotiated for a dwelling-house in which to settle his family.* Having preached twice on the Sunday, and once in the week, on the 9th of August he embarked in the steam-boat to accompany his daughter to the house of a lady with whom she had been previously engaged to reside. He left his family in good health and spirits, but was soon afterwards attacked by the mysterious disease then prevalent; and within sixteen hours all his cares and troubles were over,—he breathed his last. During Mr. Hughes's short stay in Montreal, he had endeared himself to his brethren by an unassuming piety, a suavity and

* Unit. Chron., Vol. i. p. 262.

benignity of disposition, and a calm and rational annunciation of what he believed to be the truth of God. Scenes of future usefulness, in the service of his Heavenly Father, seemed to be opening for him; great was the disappointment of those who had tried to secure the benefits of his ministry; bitter was the anguish of the widow and fatherless, but they were able to say, in the spirit of Christian resignation, to Him whose providence does nothing in vain, "Father, not our will, but thine be done."

ILMINSTER.

THIS name is Saxon, signifying the church upon the river Ile. The town stands on the turnpike road leading from Somerton to Chard, and from Taunton to Crewkerne, and is distant twelve miles south-east from Taunton, five north from Chard, and ten south from Langport. The situation is low, but very pleasant.

History has been silent concerning this place during the many centuries in which it was possessed by the Abbots of Muchelney,—a case, indeed, common enough with places that belonged to monastic societies. The abbots had a grange here in a spot near the church, now called Court Barton, on the east side of which there is a house called Court Hall, now converted into a meeting-house for the Society of Friends.

In a field north-west of the town, called Beacon Field, a very beautiful and extensive prospect opens to the view, extending northward over a rich flat country, to Mendip Hills, eastward into part of Dorsetshire, and southward to Bere and Seaton, on the sea-coast, and part of Devonshire. The surrounding country is so very populous, that from one spot on this eminence the eye commands thirty parish churches within the distance of eight miles.—COLLINSON.

Population in 1811,—2160; in 1821,—2156; in 1831,—2957.

OLD MEETING.

The minister ejected from this parish was Mr. William Alsop. He removed to London, probably soon after the passing of the Act of Uniformity. To him, however, this congregation owes its origin; and the remembrance of his example and instructions influenced the earliest members long after his removal. About the year 1675, Mr. William Hunt, an ejected schoolmaster, removed to Ilminster. He was master of the free-school at Salisbury till 1662; and ten years afterwards, on the declaration of indulgence, was chosen one of the ministers of the Dissenting congregation in that city. The declaration being recalled, he was again deprived of a useful and honourable employment; it was some time afterwards that he removed to Ilminster, near which town he was born; here he resumed his office as a schoolmaster, for which his extensive acquirements well fitted him; but he was once more obliged to cease, and in 1684 he died.*

It may be supposed that this excellent man privately aided the cause of Nonconformity at Ilminster. The first regularly appointed pastor appears

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. ii. p. 645.

to have been Mr. Edmund Batson, who settled here in 1694, soon after he had finished his studies at Taunton. Three years afterwards, he was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Marshall, who continued to officiate till his death, which occurred in the early part of the eighteenth century. The congregation then elected his son, Mr. Nicholas Marshall; in 1716, this minister had three hundred hearers, and the society afterwards flourished under his care; he died in 1725.

At a very early period the Nonconformists at Ilminster, who, like those in most other places, called themselves Presbyterians, provided themselves with a place of worship. The first house of prayer was probably small; but the number of Mr. N. Marshall's hearers warranted the erection of another building, which was accomplished in the year 1719. The exact site of the former is unknown; that of the present is near one of the principal entrances to the town. It has been enlarged since it was first built, and is now capable of seating more than four hundred persons. Its appearance is interesting; in the front are two gothic windows; the approach is through a burial-ground, where rest the remains of several ministers and members of the society.

Mr. Nicholas Marshall was succeeded in 1725 by Mr. James Strong and Mr. Thomas Collins. Mr. Collins had been, for seven years, the minister of a Presbyterian congregation at Temple Coombe, in the neighbourhood. He probably continued to fill the office of pastor there in conjunction with

that of assistant to Mr. Strong at Ilminster. In 1735, Mr. Collins removed to Bridport, and Mr. Strong undertook the whole charge, which he retained till 1738, when he died. Though the congregation was numerous at this period, the salary of Mr. Strong, after the retirement of his colleague, was only £40. per annum.

On the choice of a successor to Mr. Strong, there was a division; and those who disapproved of the election of Mr. West withdrew, and built another meeting-house at Broadway. Whether this secession was occasioned by a difference in the tastes or in the sentiments of the people, I have not been able to ascertain; it was probably the latter. Collins, Strong, and West, were all in advance of their contemporaries on points relating to religious liberty, as well as on the doctrine of the Trinity and the distinguishing tenets of Calvin. Concerning the opinions of Mr. Nicholas Marshall, during whose ministry the present chapel was built, we have no means of judging; but the appointment of Collins and Strong as his successors indicates that the congregation had been infected with the "Ariomania"* of the West of England. Most of the successors of those gentlemen have been dissatisfied with the prominent features of "orthodoxy," and have attached peculiar importance to the practice of worshiping "One God the Father," in contradistinc-

* The term given by Messrs. Bogue and Bennett to those who followed the example of Peirce, Hallet, Foster, Stogdon, and Billingsley.

tion to "One God in Three," and "Three Gods in One."

The names of the subsequent pastors will be given in the usual list, and a few particulars of their lives in the biographical department.

The congregation continued large till about the year 1770. Before that time there were no other Dissenting chapels in the town, and few in the neighbourhood. Afterwards, the people who once came from the surrounding villages to worship in the Presbyterian chapel erected buildings for themselves. The inhabitants at Ilminster have at present an Independent chapel, a small society of Methodists, and the nucleus of a Baptist congregation. These circumstances, and the fearless avowal of Unitarian sentiments on every suitable occasion, have been, of late years, unfavourable to the numerical strength of this ancient church. The present number, however, is not inconsiderable; it amounts to about one hundred and forty, exclusive of a thriving and well-conducted Sunday-school, consisting of a hundred children. This institution was commenced in the year 1790; the present minister has paid much attention to it, and has been ably supported by his young friends. The congregation also support a chapel library and a fellowship fund.

Ministers.

William Alsop	1662—
William Hunt, M. A.	1675—1684.
Edmund Batson.	1693—1697.
Thomas Marshall	1697—1705.
Nicholas Marshall	1705—1725.
Thomas Collins	1725—1735.
James Strong	1725—1738.
William West	1738—1744.
John Cranch	1745—1746.
Joseph Keech	1747—1776.
Jacob Hayes	1776—1780.
Richard Parminter	1781—1787.
Thomas Jeremy	1787—1788.
John Taylor	1788—1790.
John Noon	1788—1791.
Joseph Gummer	1791—1798.
William Tullidelph Proctor	1799—1801.
James R. Harris	1802—1808.
John Evans	1809—1816.
William Williams	1818—1819.
Thomas Bowen	1820—1823.
Edward Whitfield	1823.

The Rev. Edmund Batson was a student under Mr. Warren, and began to preach in 1693. His first settlement was at Ilminster, from whence he removed to Clapham, in 1697, where he continued till 1706; he then succeeded Mr. Matthew Warren and Mr. Emanuel Hartford, the respected pastors of Paul's Meeting, Taunton. For some years he had a colleague in the pastoral office, Mr. Thomas Cornish, who dying in 1714, Mr. Bat-

son continued sole pastor till about the year 1730, when Mr. Amory was chosen to assist him. Although requiring his aid on account as well of his advanced age and many infirmities as of the great labours of his office, he would not relinquish any part of his salary, which so displeased some members of his congregation, that they withdrew and formed another society, of which Mr. Amory became the pastor. Before the division, the Presbyterian congregation at Taunton consisted of fifteen hundred hearers, and so great was the throng, that unless persons went early it was with difficulty they could get to their pews. Mr. Batson was entirely laid aside by the infirmities of age for two years before his death, which happened in 1735.*

The Rev. JAMES STRONG was born in 1686, and received his education in the Academy at Taunton. He was ordained at Gunrowson, in Cornwall, where he preached a few years. His next settlement was at Langport, from which place he removed to Ilminster in 1725. In this situation he closed his life and labours, May 21st, 1738, in the fifty-third year of his age.

Mr. Strong was the author of "The Assembly's Shorter Catechism revised, and rendered fit for general use." This being composed upon the Anti-Calvinistic plan, drew forth some "Remarks" from the pen of Dr. Guyse, of London, which were replied to by Mr. Strong. He also published "A Sermon on the death of the Rev. and learned Mr. Henry Grove, preached at Taunton, March 3, 1738." His own funeral discourse, preached by Mr. Amory, was published "at the unanimous request of the ministers present." The following passages shew in what manner Mr. Strong discharged his ministerial duties. "He sought for Christianity in the Scriptures by a critical and constant study of them, and by earnest prayer. These were the standard of his faith and practice, and by these he tried the creeds and systems of fallible men. He did not, as the manner of too many is, first settle his faith by the favourite opinions of a party, and then

* Toulmin's History of Taunton.

read the Scriptures with a disposition to see nothing in them which would not agree with these: but he endeavoured to find the genuine sense of the sacred writings, and by this tried the truth of opinions he had before embraced, or that were afterward recommended. This impartial study of the Scriptures, joined with a solid judgment and an honest heart, and succeeded by the Divine blessing, qualified him to recommend to advantage the best religion to his hearers."—"Farther, he was a thorough and a consistent Dissenter. A regard to Christ as sole King and Lord in his church, to the sacred Scriptures as a perfect rule of faith and manners, and to the unalienable rights of conscience and private judgment,—determined him to dissent from the Established Church, and reject their claims of authority in matters religious, and their additions to the faith and worship of the gospel. This same principle made him also reject equally like claims and additions made by those who, dissenting from the national church, and without the countenance of the civil magistrate, pretend, with a very ill grace, to a power they condemn in others; and, self-condemned, invade those rights of conscience they maintain as sacred against the Establishment. As he disliked every thing of an imposing temper in others, he kept clear of it himself; he stood fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made him free, and abhorred to lord it over God's heritage; allowing all the same liberty he took for himself, and maintaining a great esteem and friendship for those who, in pursuance of this liberty, greatly differed from the sentiments he embraced as true." *

OTHER MINISTERS AT ILMINSTER.

Mr. CRANCH removed from Modbury, and continued pastor here till his death, March 25, 1745.

Mr. KEECH, chosen two years afterwards, also ended his days here in 1776.

* Amory's Sermon on the Death of Strong, 1738, p. 33.

Mr. HAYES, a native of Broadway, pursued his studies under Mr. Rooker, at Bridport, and gave up the ministry in this town.

Mr. PARMINTER, another of Mr. Rooker's pupils, lived some time as a minister at Wellington, preached a few months, during Mr. Fawcett's illness, at Kidderminster, and then settled at Ilminster, whence he removed to Widdiscombe, where he died.

Mr. NOON was a native of Leicestershire, and educated at Daventry; he left this congregation for one at Lambrook, and went from Lambrook to Poole, but not as a preacher.

Mr. TAYLOR became a Quaker, and kept a school in Lancashire after he resigned his connexion with Mr. Noon; he had previously been, for a short time, successively classical tutor at Daventry, and minister at Walmesley.

Mr. GUMMER was born in the neighbourhood of South Petherton; he also was a Daventry student. Before he settled at Ilminster he officiated both at Hereford and Worcester; he afterwards lived in London and other places, but without a stated charge.

Mr. PROCTOR, the son of Mr. Proctor, of Oldbury, received his academical education at Northampton.

Mr. HARRIS, another pupil of Mr. Rooker, was ordained at Lyme in 1775, and continued minister of the Independent congregation there till 1801, when he relinquished his office in consequence of his embracing Unitarianism; he removed to Ilminster, and died there in 1808.

Mr. EVANS resigned his office as pastor of the congregation in consequence of ill health, went to Carmarthen, where he preached a short time, and afterwards settled at Evesham.

Mr. WILLIAMS studied for the ministry at Carmarthen; he had been settled at Ilminster only one year when he was taken off by consumption, at the age of twenty-two.

Mr. BOWEN removed to Walsall, where he is still living.

CREWKERNE.

"Crokehorn is seete under the rootes of an hille. Ther I saw nothing very notable. Yet ther ys a praty crosse environid with smaul pillers, and a praty toune house yn the market place."—Leland.

"A very ancient town, known in the Saxon times by the name of Cruceærne, which is compounded of the words Cruce a cross, and Eærne a cottage, or place of retirement. There is no doubt that this name was applied to it in the early ages of Christianity, when churches were rare, and hermitages or cells were the usual places of religious associations."

"It is situated in a rich and fertile vale, well wooded and watered, and surrounded with cultivated eminences, which command extensive and very beautiful prospects."—Collinson.

Population in 1811,—3021; in 1821,—3434; in 1831,—3789.

CREWKERNE.

In the year 1662, the incumbent at Crewkerne was Mr. Tomkins. He was, at first, among the sufferers for conscience' sake, but was afterwards tempted to conform.* Some of his hearers, however, were less flexible; and, having adopted the principles of Nonconformity, steadily adhered to them. For two years, from 1665 to 1667, they had the ministerial services of Mr. James Stevenson, who had been ejected from the living of Martock by the Act of Uniformity, and at length driven from the parish entirely by the Oxford Act.† He then removed to Crewkerne, and preached in his

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. ii. p. 389.

† The circumstances in which this act was passed increase our detestation of the spirit which prompted it. So completely had bigotry and spiritual pride hardened the hearts of the Government, that they disregarded alike the warnings of God and the miseries of man. At the very moment they were passing this tyrannical statute, the plague was devastating the metropolis, and the ejected ministers (whom it was their object to punish) were almost the only persons who had sufficient courage and benevolence to visit the abodes of pestilence and comfort its unhappy victims. When the new ministers of the city churches fled and left their flocks in the utmost extremity, these noble-minded men entered the forsaken pulpits, went from house to house on their errands of mercy, and by their public and private exertions, under the blessing of God, the face of death wore a less ghastly smile. And how were they rewarded? By the thanks of the House of Commons? By the spontaneous and loudly expressed gratitude of the king and people?—No; but by being hunted from place to place as beings unworthy the blessings of freedom or even the common courtesies of life! An oath, a wicked, enslaving oath, was tendered them, and if

own hired house. Here, however, he was not more safe, for he met with many enemies, some of whom threatened to burn down his house. At the end of the two years he returned to Martock, and partly supported himself by practising as a physician, for which he had prepared himself while living in Holland many years previously. When the indulgence was published, he again preached at Martock in a licensed house, and continued his benevolent attempts to do good to the souls and bodies of men till his death in 1685. His talents and character rendered him highly respected by many of the neighbouring gentlemen; but the trials and losses he experienced were very great, and would have subdued his spirit if he had not firmly trusted in God, and steadfastly determined that "his heart should not reproach him as long as he lived."*

Mr. Stevenson's labours at Crewkerne were of short duration, but the influence of his instructions and example were felt long after he left. The next minister of whom any traces remain, is Mr. Robert Knight, who probably settled with the congregation before the commencement of the last century.† In 1715 he had two hundred and fifty hearers; he was living in 1739, but we may infer that he was then old and disabled, from the circumstance that

a kind Providence had not sustained in the most extraordinary manner those who refused it, hundreds of learned and excellent men would have perished for want or been reduced to beggary!

* These were his own words. See an interesting memoir of his life, Noncon. Mem., Vol. ii. p. 367.

† Mr. Wilson's MSS.

Mr. John Collier was the pastor of the congregation in the preceding year. The exact dates of Mr. Collier's settlement and removal are unknown; nor have we any other certain information till we come to the settlement of the first Mr. Blake. Several persons now living remember to have heard that a Mr. Hallett was his immediate predecessor. Mr. Blake began his ministry at Crewkerne in the year 1754; he was succeeded by his son at the end of nearly forty-five years. The subsequent ministers have been Mr. Wilson, from the York College, and now at Newbury, and Mr. Walker. The congregation has never been very large; and within the last few years removals and deaths have diminished its numbers; but it is still respectable for its size, the intelligence of its members, and the useful institutions it supports, consisting of a good Sunday-school formed in 1796, and a chapel library of six hundred books and pamphlets, commenced in 1825. Unitarian opinions have been cherished here for many years. There is no evidence that any of the ministers have been Trinitarians since the erection of the chapel, the date of which is 1733.

Accounts of any previous place of worship except Mr. Stevenson's "own hired house," have been sought in vain. The present building is of the plainest kind, but is substantially and comfortably fitted up. Its dimensions are 42 feet by 24; there are two galleries; and adjoining the chapel is a small burial-ground. In the year 1811, considerable repairs were effected, including a new roof and new

pews, at an expense of upwards of £400. Within the building are four monuments; the first is in memory of Mr. Blake, Sen., Mrs. Blake, his wife, and Hannah, their daughter; the second in memory of Hannah, first wife of Mr. Blake, Jun., and Hannah, his only daughter by that lady; the third in memory of Mrs. Stuckey, of Langport, who died in 1750, aged 54 years, and Mr. and Mrs. Jolliffe, erected by Samuel Sparks, Esq.; the fourth in memory of Mr. Blake, Jun. It is the intention of Dr. Blake, of Taunton, one of the surviving brothers of Mr. Blake, Jun., to add an inscription recording the death of the second wife of that gentleman. The inscriptions on the monuments of the two ministers are as follow:

AS A TRIBUTE OF FILIAL DUTY AND AFFECTION, THIS MONUMENT, ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF THE REV. WILLIAM BLAKE, MINISTER OF THIS CONGREGATION DURING THE LONG PERIOD OF FORTY-FIVE YEARS. HE DIED MARCH 29, 1799, AGED 69.

A FAITHFUL SHEPHERD O'ER THE LITTLE FLOCK
COMMITTED TO HIS CHARGE; HIS MASTER'S WILL
WITH ZEAL HE DID ENFORCE, AND LIVED HIS LAW.

M. S.
OF
REV. WILLIAM BLAKE, SON OF REV. WILLIAM AND HANNAH BLAKE, WHO, HAVING ZEALOUSLY AND FAITHFULLY DISCHARGED THE DUTIES OF A MINISTER OF THIS CONGREGATION FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, AND HAVING LIVED RESPECTED AND BELOVED, DIED SINCERELY LAMENTED BY HIS FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND RELATIONS, 18th FEBRUARY, 1821, AGED 47.

WHAT THOUGH THE GRAVE CLOSES OVER THE RIGHTEOUS MAN; STILL HIS EXAMPLE LIVES.

Ministers.

—— Tomkins	1662—1665.
James Stevenson	1665—1667.
Robert Knight.....	1690—1738.
John Collier.....	1738—
—— Hallett.....	—1754.
William Blake, Sen.	1754—1798.
William Blake, Jun.	1798—1821.
William Wilson	1821—1823.
Samuel Walker	1823.

Mr. Blake, Sen., was descended from pious and worthy ancestors, a collateral branch of the family of that true patriot, Admiral Blake. His grandfather, the Rev. Malachi Blake, a Nonconformist minister, resided at Blagdon, four miles from Taunton. This gentleman laid the foundation of the Dissenting congregation at Wellington, in Somersetshire. After the defeat of the Duke of Monmouth, to whose cause he had been friendly, he was obliged to flee from home; he went to London, disguised in a lay dress with a tye-wig and a sword. He had three sons, John, Malachi, and William. The latter, a woolstapler, in Taunton, died at a good old age, highly respected, and left three sons and five daughters. The subject of this memoir was the youngest of these children; he was born July 7, 1730, received his classical learning under the Rev. Mr. Hurly, a clergyman of the Established Church in Taunton; and, in 1749, commenced his academical studies at Northampton, under Dr. Doddridge. On leaving the Academy, he settled with the congregation at Crewkerne, and was ordained there May 11, 1757. Here, though he received several earnest invitations from other places,

he spent the whole of his future life, zealously discharging the duties of his office. Feeling the infirmities of age, he resigned his connexion as pastor, July 29, 1798; but he did not wholly withdraw from public services till a few months afterwards.

Mr. Blake was one of those who, in teaching others, plainly evinced his own belief of the truths he tried to impress upon their minds. His occasionally authoritative manner, tempered with mildness and benevolence, gave the air of paternal admonition to his public discourses. In social life he was a kind and tender husband; an affectionate, indulgent parent; a sincere and warm friend; candid, generous, and humane to all. Though grave and sedate, he ever discovered an habitual cheerfulness, and such equanimity, that few, if any, ever saw his temper ruffled, or his mind discomposed. No one lived more under the constant influence of the all-sustaining principles of a superintending providence and a future state of immortality. Hence he derived support and comfort under all the afflictions of life; and well-grounded, unshaken hope at the hour of death.

Mr. Blake was twice married, and had five children, four of whom survived both their parents; the eldest was Dr. Malachi Blake, of Taunton; and the second, the Rev. William Blake, who succeeded to his father's ministerial charge. His funeral sermon was preached and given to the public through the press by the Rev. T. Thomas.*

Mr. BLAKE, Jun., was born at Crewkerne, March 29, 1773. He received the early part of his classical education at Litton, in Dorsetshire, under the Rev. James Kircup, and afterwards at the Free School in Crewkerne. From a child he was remarkable for piety, diligent and regular attention, a steady and solid progress in learning, and a considerable talent for calculations.

* An Appendix contains the Address and Prayer delivered at the interment, and a memoir of the deceased, by Dr. Toulmin; also a sketch of Mr. Blake's character, and an elegiac poem, by the Rev. F. Webb.

Having manifested a fixed desire to devote himself to the ministry, he went, in 1790, to the Academy at Northampton, then under the care of the Rev. Mr. Horsey. Here he pursued his studies with diligence, and by his regular habits, intelligence, and fidelity, he secured the confidence of his tutors, and the respect and affection of his fellow-students.

On his father's resignation, Mr. Blake was unanimously chosen pastor of the congregation at Crewkerne, where he remained till his death, Feb. 18, 1821, having spent twenty-four years in uninterrupted harmony with his flock. The disease which removed him in the prime of life attacked insidiously; many days it proceeded in its work of destruction before it excited his own apprehension, or the serious fears of his family. It was with a bitterness of anguish which, but for the solaces of religion, would have been truly terrible, this awful truth was perceived by his near relatives; and the news of his death spread the deepest sorrow through the town and neighbourhood. His remains were followed to the tomb by a long train of mourners, who wept for him as for a friend and brother. The solemn service was performed by the Rev. T. Thomas, of Wareham, who also officiated at the grave of Mr. Blake, Sen., and the funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. S. Fawcett, of Yeovil.

Mr. Blake's family history resembles that of his father; he was twice married, and left one son and three daughters. The distinguishing character of his mind was clearness, of his heart benevolence, of his manners simplicity. He was so remarkable for discretion, that his friends often resorted to him for counsel; his probity and moderation were so well known, and his talent for business so universally acknowledged, that his advice was extensively sought, and generally gave satisfaction. He was capable of much tenderness, and even ardour, notwithstanding the extreme calmness of his manners. Those to whom he sustained the relations of husband, father, brother, and friend, well know with what strength of affection his heart could glow. To few men has a more equal and happy lot been granted. In

the possession of competence, occupied in the duties of a profession which was his early choice, and which exactly accorded with his disposition, surrounded by friends who esteemed and loved him, and peculiarly happy in his domestic connexions, he might seem, indeed, to have been exempted from that portion of suffering which the moral Governor of the world sees fit to dispense to every human being. Yet suffering, sufficiently severe, sprung out of the very sources of his felicity. No sooner had one who contributed to his happiness, taught him the uncommon worth of her character and the great value of her society, than she was taken from him. And subsequently, though brighter days were in reserve for him, there were sources of anxiety and distress connected with his infant family, which brought him acquainted even with the bitterness of sorrow, and put to a severe test his trust in the wisdom and goodness of God. There was one most engaging child to whom, by peculiar circumstances, his parents were more than commonly endeared. After a brief warning he was taken from them; the stroke was severe, and severely it was felt; but now, as at former times, the mourners remembered that He who gave in mercy, in mercy took away, and the feelings of humanity were moderated and sustained by the principles of the Gospel.

The character of Mr. Blake as a minister was no less exemplary. He was faithful in declaring what he conceived to be the whole counsel of God. His own mind was strongly impressed with a sense of the great truths of the gospel. When he left the Academy, his theological opinions were Arian, at least respecting the pre-existence of Christ. A closer examination of Scripture led him to adopt what is called modern Unitarianism. This is evident from the Liturgy which he compiled for the use of his congregation, and a sermon preached by him before the Southern Unitarian Society. Deeming his opinions of unspeakable importance, maintaining that they best deserved the name of practical, he earnestly defended them. Yet his general style of preaching was plain, serious, and scriptural. Glowing with love and gratitude to God and benevolence to

man, he spoke from the heart to the heart. He had a deep conviction that piety is not a rapturous feeling, but a fixed and steady principle arising from just views of the perfections and providence of God, affecting the heart at all times, and regulating the conduct under all circumstances. He believed that a preparation for heaven must be obtained, not by trusting in the merits and sufferings of Jesus Christ, but by obeying his precepts, by imitating his example, by controlling the selfish and cherishing the generous affections, and by seeking personal happiness in the promotion of the happiness of others. And he lived the precepts which he taught. Out of the pulpit he was quite as much the pastor of his flock as in it. Whenever any of his people were in sickness or affliction, his attention to them was most kind and soothing. Over the poor he took a special charge; and in all seasons of peculiar severity and distress the services he rendered were pre-eminently judicious and effectual.

The original memoir from which this account is taken contains many more interesting remarks. The author of that memoir, whose initials are those of Dr. Southwood Smith, thus concludes: "He has finished his work; he has terminated his earthly course;—his life was honourable; his death was peaceful! There is no sense of the word in which he was not a faithful Christian, and the reward of Christian fidelity was his."*

* Monthly Repos., Vol. xvi. p. 268.

Dorsetshire.

BRIDPORT.

DORCHESTER.

WAREHAM.

POOLE

BRIDPORT.

Bridport is situated in a vale surrounded by hills, a mile north from the sea. Its haven is situated at the mouth of the river Brit, but it has never been of any note in maritime affairs. The town has a respectable appearance, the principal streets being broad and spacious, and many of the houses very well built.

For a great number of years the inhabitants were chiefly supported by the manufacture of twines, lines, small cordage, nets and sail-cloth; and a considerable trade is still carried on in these articles.

Population in 1811,—3567; in 1821,—3742; in 1831,—4242.

UNITARIAN CHAPEL.

THE Dissenting cause at Bridport appears to have originated with Mr. Eaton, who was ejected from the living in 1662.* All the information concerning him is, that "he was an ingenious and delicate preacher," and published "two sermons vindicating the ministers of Christ from the charge of being *House-creepers*."† Mr. Joseph Hallet, who was ejected from Chesleborough, in Somersetshire, retired to this town and lived here, probably, in the private discharge of ministerial duties, till he was invited to Exeter.‡ In the neighbourhood of Bridport, there were many Nonconformists; ministers lost their livings by the Bartholomew Act, at Allington, Beaminster, Charmouth, Chardstock, Hawkchurch, Lyme, Monkton, Whitchurch, and other places; most of them preached occasionally, and some raised large conregations.

Mr. Hallet removed to Exeter about the year 1672. In that year, Mr. Downe took steps for placing the cause on a permanent basis at Bridport. This appears from a licence of a private house, in

* N. M. Vol. i. p. 444. † In allusion to the passage 2 Timothy iii. 6.
‡ N. M. Vol. i. p. 355.

which he was to officiate, belonging to a Mr. Golding. This document is dated May 1, 1672; it describes Mr. Downe as an Independent preacher, though in the time of Cromwell, he was ordained by a Presbytery. A list of the members of the Bridport congregation, at this period, is still preserved; the number was about a hundred. A few years afterwards, the government became more jealous than ever, of all who were opposed, in the slightest degree, to the Church of England. The Nonconformists at Bridport shared in the persecutions of the time; and in 1680, the pastor and some of his people were imprisoned. Whether they were immediately concerned in the horrible catastrophe which followed, does not appear; but the failure of Monmouth's rebellion and the inhuman ferocity of Jefferies, inflicted great injury on their cause. The inhabitants had to endure the dreadful spectacle of the execution of twelve persons by the order of this "unjust judge."

The next minister of whom there is any account is Mr. Baker. He published several works and had the reputation of being "an excellent evangelical preacher."* Two years after his decease came Mr. Drewitt, who remained at Bridport till 1737, when he accepted an invitation to Taunton. His services at the latter place were of short duration; at the end of one year, symptoms of consumption obliged him to remove to Beaminster for change of air, which proved ineffectual, and there he

* Mr. Wilson's MSS.

died.* Mr. Drewitt's successor was Mr. Collins, during whose ministry the society divided, and the seceders commenced the present large and respectable Independent congregation. "Mr. Collins was happy in his connexion (says a writer in the Protestant Dissenters' Magazine,†) till the year 1742, when the harmony of it was broken by suspicions, which some then began to entertain of his orthodoxy in the doctrine of the Trinity." The Bridport Dissenters were, at this time, numerous;—more than two hundred separated from Mr. Collins, and the heterodox section was still larger; the majority adhered to their pastor and continued to enjoy his services, till he was disabled by disease.

In the year 1764, Mr. Sutton was chosen. At the end of five years, he removed to London and was succeeded by Mr. Waters. The latter minister was ordained in 1769; by him the register of baptisms was commenced. He was followed by Mr. Howe, of whose services there is yet a grateful recollection. In 1791, four years after the settlement of Mr. Howe, the congregation resolved to erect a new chapel. The place in which they previously assembled was held upon a lease under the corporation. The following resolution was passed at this period; "That the present meeting-house is extremely mean in its appearance, unbecoming the respectability and opulence of the society, incommodious both to the speakers and hearers, insuf-

* Toulmin's History of Taunton, Savage's Edition, p. 176.
† Vol. v. p. 246.

ficient for the accommodation of all those who worship there, and, moreover, in a very decayed and ruinous condition." Before the meeting separated, the sum of £567. was subscribed towards the erection of a new building; and this sum was soon increased by the congregation and their immediate connexions to £1443. The total expense of purchasing the land and building the chapel amounted to about £500. more, which remained some years as a debt, but was eventually raised and paid by the society.

The new place of worship was opened on Sunday, March 9th, 1794. The season being inconvenient for the usual meeting of distant friends, Mr. Howe preached on one part of the sabbath and Mr. Fawcett on the other. To the exertions of the latter minister, who resided near Bridport some years without a pastoral charge, this society were largely indebted. The opening of the new chapel was celebrated on Wednesday, April 30th, 1794; sermons being preached by Mr. Manning, of Exeter, and Dr. Toulmin, of Taunton, and devotional services conducted by Mr. Gummer, of Ilminster, and Mr. Kell, of Wareham.

This place of worship is one of those which can scarcely fail to attract the eye of the traveller. It stands on a gentle ascent, in a conspicuous and eligible situation, within sight, yet partly removed from the noise, of the principal street. The words Unitarian Chapel are inscribed on the front. Its height and general appearance, now, leave a less

favourable impression on the traveller than they did at first, in consequence of the erection, immediately adjoining, of the Literary Institution, a handsome and commodious edifice, for which the inhabitants are indebted to the generosity of Henry Warburton, Esq., one of the members for the Borough. The piece of ground between the chapel and the street, being small, is not a general cemetery, but has a few vaults belonging to members of the congregation. The interior of the building is particularly neat; if any thing appears unnecessary to a stranger, it is the curtains which conceal some of the pews. In addition to galleries on three sides, there is a small one raised above that at the end for the use of the choir. Over the pulpit is a tablet with the following inscription:

TO THE MEMORY OF
THE REV. THOMAS HOWE,
THE FAITHFUL AND BELOVED PASTOR
OF THIS CHRISTIAN SOCIETY
FOR 32 YEARS,
WHO DIED 15TH NOVEMBER, 1820,
AGED 61.

"BE NOT SLOTHFUL, BUT FOLLOWERS OF THEM WHO THROUGH FAITH AND PATIENCE INHERIT THE PROMISES."—Heb vi. 12.

Before the chapel was opened the congregation met to consider the propriety of adopting a liturgy. After some discussion they decided in favour of doing so for a given period, at the end of which, they again met and resolved to continue the plan.

The following copy of the original resolutions may be useful as a record of the opinions at the time in question, not only of the Bridport congregation but of several others.

Resolved, 1st.—That it is the opinion of this meeting, that the present mode of conducting public worship is objectionable. Because the minister alone being the speaker, the people are apt to consider themselves as merely passive, and to think that the minister is rather praying for than with them. Because the people, not knowing beforehand what language the minister will use, must wait until he has uttered the sentence, before they can know whether they can adopt it as their own. And especially—Because the devotion of a whole congregation is hereby made to depend too much on the frame of mind of the minister, which, like those of others, must be very different at different times.—

On the other hand.

Resolved, 2nd.—That by the use of printed forms, the people have an opportunity of perusing them in private, and by this means of being better prepared for using them in public. The attention of the worshipers is more easily kept up, when they themselves take an active part in the service. Proper devotional affections are more likely to be excited by a whole congregation uniting their voices in the various solemn addresses to the Divine Being. And, where such a provision is made, public worship may with more ease and propriety be carried on by a congregation, in case of a minister's absence.

Resolved, 3rd —That it has been objected to the use of printed forms, that free prayer is one of the principal distinctions between Dissenters and members of the Established Church; but the persons who urge this objection should consider that this alone would by no means justify a separation from the establishment; and that the principles of Dissent are the unalienable rights of private judgment in matters of religion, and the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as the sole head of the church.

Besides, is there not a very material difference between being compelled to join in a Liturgy, the sentiments of which may oppose our own convictions, and voluntarily joining in the use of forms which we thoroughly approve?

It has also been objected to precomposed forms, that when custom has rendered them familiar, however excellent in themselves, they cease to produce the desired effect. But, besides that this objection lies equally against many of those which are called Extempore prayers, it is in a great measure obviated by introducing a variety of services, to be used in succession, so that the same shall not return in less than three or four Sabbaths.

Another objection to the use of forms has been, that it is limiting the operations of the Holy Spirit, and that, therefore, there is no reason to expect the Divine blessing upon it. But this does not appear to be supported by reason, since God is a God of order and not of confusion; and had this mode been displeasing to him, it would never have been adopted in the Jewish church, in the services of which our Saviour himself joined. Moreover, it has been urged that the best forms of prayer cannot be supposed to include all the variety of cases which it may be proper to introduce. This reason is also done away, if the minister be permitted to use a prayer of his own as a part of the service.

In accordance with these resolutions, the congregegation introduced four forms of prayer which they have since continued to use. They still maintain their position as one of the largest Unitarian societies in the West of England.* Bridport is one of the few towns which retain corporations consisting

* Among the members are descendants of several ministers in the town and neighbourhood;—the names of Downe and Gundry appear in the list of the two thousand, and the families of Colfox and Hounsell are directly descended from Mr. Collins.

chiefly of Dissenters ; and here many members of that body belong to this congregation. In addition to some of the oldest families and most influential inhabitants of the town, there is, in this society, a a large proportion of that class to whom the gospel was first preached and who heard it gladly. The venerable biographer of Mr. Howe, writing in 1820, says "His capacious chapel was well filled by a serious and attentive audience, a considerable part of which was formed of labouring mechanics and the industrious poor." And what can be a better proof that the true spirit of Christianity pervades a house of prayer, than the circumstance that the high and the low are to be found there deriving equal advantages from its services? This congregation has occasionally distinguished itself by generous contributions, particularly towards defraying the expenses of throwing out Lord Sidmouth's Bill, the fund for the persecuted Protestants in the south of France, and the support of the British and Foreign Schools. The principal institutions connected with their own chapel are a Sunday-school, conducted by the younger members of the society, and consisting of a hundred and twenty children; a fellowship fund, from which liberal grants have frequently been made to Unitarian churches in want of assistance; and a chapel library, containing about one thousand volumes, the circulation of which is unusually great. There is much reason to believe that this society will continue to flourish—to find in their powerful principles

encouragement to persevere in useful undertakings, and afford to those neighbouring communities with which it associates so cordially, at once an example of congregational stability and all necessary help in acquiring it.*

Ministers.

William Eaton	1662—
Joseph Hallet.....	1662—1672.
Richard Downe.....	1672—1687.
Samuel Baker	1687—1727.
Robert Drewitt.....	1729—1737.
Thomas Collins	1735—1764.
William Sutton	1764—1769.
George Waters.....	1769—1787.
Thomas Howe	1787—1820.
George Barker Wawne	1821—1827.
Robert Cree	1827—1834.
Philip Harwood	1835.

* The present minister, Mr. Philip Harwood, was invited to settle here on leaving the University of Edinburgh. This gentleman commenced his studies for the ministry with the intention of devoting himself to the service of some "orthodox" congregation. Possessing, however, an earnest desire to arrive at truth, he exercised his own judgment to an unusual extent, particularly during the delivery of a course of academical lectures by Dr. Chalmers, of whose class he was a member. His prepossessions in favour of orthodoxy, having been previously weakened by a private and impartial study of the sacred records, received a still greater shock by what appeared to him the incongruous assertions and feeble reasonings of the celebrated lecturer, on the subject of the atonement. Mr. Harwood soon afterwards became a decided Unitarian.

MR. HOWE was born at Uffculme, in Devonshire, about the year 1759. His excellent parents first placed him under the instruction of Mr. Lamport, at that time the minister of Uffculme, and afterwards of Honiton. At the age of fifteen, he was sent to Hoxton, where his amiable manners and his exemplary deportment secured for him the affection both of his tutors and fellow-students. On leaving Hoxton, he was, for a short time, domestic chaplain and assistant to the Rev. Sir Harry Trelawny, who ever retained for him the highest esteem. On Sir Harry's conforming to the Established Church, Mr. Howe removed to Ringwood, where he resided a few years, the minister of a small Presbyterian society. On the death of Mr. Waters, in 1787, he received an unanimous invitation to Bridport. In the following year he was ordained, the society being favoured with the assistance of the Rev. J. Manning, and the Rev. Doctors Kippis and Rees. With this affectionate people he spent the remaining thirty-three years of his life, discharging his pastoral duties, and promoting the cause of truth and righteousness. His congregation vied with each other in rendering his situation happy; and that he had a just claim to such regard, no one who knew him could deny. His talents, in themselves good, were diligently cultivated and usefully applied. His memory was retentive and his judgment sound: his temper naturally sweet and his feelings lively. In the friendly circle he was uniformly cheerful and instructive; and in the world, he was the warm but temperate advocate of peace, truth, and liberty. His theological sentiments were the result of close and impartial investigation. For several years after he left Hoxton, he believed in the pre-existence of Christ, but on further inquiry, he became what is commonly termed a decided Unitarian. Mr. Howe was distinguished by the manner in which he discharged the duties of his office. His mornings were diligently employed in reading and composition, his evenings in friendly and pastoral visits. The Monday in each week he particularly devoted to those who by sickness had been detained from public worship. His dis-

courses were plain, serious, and scriptural; impressively delivered, and admirably adapted to the capacities and circumstances of his hearers; he might, in the best sense of the word, be called a *time server*. He studiously availed himself of every opportunity of improving passing events for the benefit of his hearers. To the younger part of his flock he paid particular attention, not merely by occasional addresses, but also by regular and stated catechetical lectures. The poor, the sick, and the aged, largely experienced his kindness. Generosity, and that of the noblest kind, founded on Christian benevolence and supported by well-regulated economy, formed a prominent feature in his character.

Mr. Howe died November 15th, 1820. He had for several months been afflicted with shortness of breath and occasional spasms. Though fully apprized of the alarming nature of his disease, he preserved his wonted serenity, and was not prevented from preaching more than one sabbath. On the day of his death, he dined and spent the afternoon with a friend, who attended him home and left him as well as usual, only a little fatigued with the walk. After entering his house, he had not sat many minutes, before the servant perceived his hands fall, and his head droop, and thought he was asleep; but on nearer inspection found that he was dead. Thus suddenly did an All-wise Providence remove from the world, one of the best of men.

It was natural to expect that his death would be deeply regretted. The inhabitants manifested their sorrow by unanimously agreeing to postpone, till after his interment, a general illumination, which was to have taken place several days earlier. The congregation took upon themselves the management of the funeral, and his remains were followed to the grave by an immense concourse of people. Six Dissenting ministers of different denominations supported the pall, thus shewing their respect for one whose charity embraced the sincere and upright of every denomination. Mr. Manning, of Exeter, conducted the funeral service, and on the succeeding sabbath, a suitable discourse was delivered to a large audience, by Dr. Southwood

Smith, who, at the unanimous request of the congregation, gave it to the public.*

MR. WAWNE was a native of Hull. His mother dying when he was young, he was brought up under the care of her relatives. The religious sentiments which he first imbibed were "orthodox," but after careful examination, at an early period of life, he embraced Unitarianism. In consequence of a long cherished desire to devote himself to the ministry, he became a student at York, in the year 1816. Having completed the usual course with distinguished credit, he was chosen to succeed Mr. Howe, at Bridport. Mr. Wawne possessed unusual qualifications for his task, and gave himself to it with an ardour and singleness of purpose seldom surpassed. The vigour and comprehensiveness of his mind, his habitual fervour of devotional feeling, and his benevolent anxiety for the immortal welfare of his flock, rendered his pulpit services peculiarly efficacious. He deemed it one of his greatest duties and most pleasing employments to instruct and improve the young. And he felt it to be a blessing that, in this part of his task, he received the assistance of several worthy and estimable friends. To the interests of the other members of his flock he was equally attentive. Regulating his conduct by the precepts of the apostle, he rebuked not an elder, but entreated him as a father, and the younger men as brethren, the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters. In private, his attention to their interests was equally unremitting. The poor he relieved, the sick he visited and consoled, the dying he prepared for death. Nor, while he thus proved himself a faithful shepherd, was he indifferent to the welfare of other religious societies, or uninterested in the promulgation of their doctrines. Whilst health permitted, he laboured to diffuse the knowledge of Christian truth, and to fix in the minds of others, the principles by which his own was influenced. When dis-

* M. R. Vol. xvi. p. 53.

abled by sickness, he continued to regard those principles as supremely important and to derive from them constant support. Conversing a few days before his death with the friend who was constantly at his side during his illness, on the words of the Psalmist :—"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart God will not despise," he observed, "Is it not strange that so many persons can be found in this enlightened age, who implicitly believe in the popular doctrine of the atonement? At this time, when I am turning my thoughts in every direction, I do assure you that the truth of the Unitarian doctrine seems to shine out more and more clearly."

A decline of health was apparent soon after he settled at Bridport. His illness was lingering, and assumed towards its close the usual symptoms of consumption. Indications of a constitutional tendency to this fatal disease were not wanting; and the duties of the ministry, performed with a trembling solicitude, and connected in his case with much mental excitement, called into action its latent principles. In the Autumn of 1825, he resigned his situation as pastor of the society, but, at their request, continued among them with the assistance of the friend just mentioned, the Rev. J. G. Teggin. The hopes of his people were not realized; increasing debility made him daily more unable to encounter exertion, and gradually withdrew him from his labours. He died April 18th, 1827.*

* Monthly Repos. N.S. Vol. i. p. 447. See also a faithful tribute to the memory of Mr. Wawne in the sermon on his death, by the Rev. E. Whitfield.

DORCHESTER.

"Dorchester is delightfully situated on an ascent above the river Frome, which bounds it on the north side, at the distance of about six miles from the British Channel; and on the south-west it opens on pleasant downs intermixed with corn fields. The view is every where uncommonly pleasant; and the numerous flocks of sheep which whiten the plains, the river with its winding course, and the gently rising hills in the distance, altogether give it an enchanting effect. The town forms an irregular square, though, in former times, as appears from observation, it most probably made a complete one. It consists principally of three spacious streets, which join each other about the middle: these, with the subordinate ones, are well paved, and in general adorned with handsome buildings of brick and stone. Those of most eminence are, the three churches of St. Peter's, Trinity, and All Saints; the Town Hall, the County Hall, and the New Gaol."—Britton and Brayley.

Population in 1811,—2546; in 1821,—2743; in 1831,—3033.

OLD DISSENTING MEETING-HOUSE,

PEASE LANE.

In 1662, two ministers were ejected from Dorchester, and one from Fordington,—a populous parish adjoining. The former were Mr. Benn, of Allhallows, and Mr. Hammond, of Trinity and St. Peter's; the latter was Mr. Churchill. Mr. Hammond afterwards became the minister of a large Dissenting congregation at Taunton, in conjunction with Mr. Newton, and remained there till the cruelties which followed Monmouth's rebellion drove him to London. Mr. Benn continued among his own adherents, and preached to them as he had opportunity, till his death, which occurred in 1680. He was then succeeded by his neighbour and fellow-sufferer Mr. Churchill, who had previously assisted him in the ministry.*

These excellent men appear not only to have organized a church of Nonconformists, but to have placed it, by the Divine assistance, on a permanent basis. It grew, like many others, amidst the storms of persecution; Mr. Benn was often brought into trouble, and sometimes imprisoned for preaching to his flock; and pastors and people were subject to a

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 450.

long series of trials. Five years after this good man's death, the infamous Jefferies visited the town, and if there were any among the Dissenters who could be deterred by "the fear of man" from maintaining their principles, such persons must have trembled at the atrocities committed by his order. It was here he ordered the court to be hung with scarlet on the morning of the trial,—a horrid omen of the sanguinary proceedings which ensued,—the execution of so many victims for their alleged share in an insurrection which no enlightened friend to liberty can safely reprobate.*

* On this painful subject my limits will not allow me to dilate: but neither can I be altogether silent. That the earliest members of the churches whose history I am relating were deeply concerned in the rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth, there can, I think, be no doubt. Notices will be found in various parts of this work, and particularly in the account of the congregation at Taunton, which shew that this class largely contributed to the attempt, and bitterly suffered from the defeat. And I confess I cannot conceive how their conduct can be harshly censured by those who call themselves their descendants, and who are acquainted both with the principles on which the insurrectionists refused to conform to the Church of England, and with the series of irritating circumstances which they had hitherto patiently endured. We may grant that the motives of Monmouth were not so high as they ought to have been,—we may admit that his title was questionable, his projects crude, his capacity unequal to the undertaking, and his professions occasionally insincere: but still we should remember that the party whom he opposed had always been the greatest foes of religious liberty, and that the Dissenters had every thing to hope from the removal of that party from power. While considering the history of this period, it is impossible to attribute the conduct of men in general to motives of a secular nature; their motives, if we may be allowed to judge, were almost invariably religious. "The truly orthodox members of our church (says Charles James Fox, in his valuable fragment) regarded monarchy not as a human, but as a divine institution, and passive obedience and non-resistance, not as political maxims, but as articles of religion."—All the grievances of which the Dissenters complained, and from which they hoped to be freed by a new government, had their source in, or were intimately connected with, designs to crush every body of religionists which did not avow High-Church principles. Witness some of

This tragedy was performed during the ministry of Mr. Churchill, and his congregation was, doubtless, in some degree affected by it. No records of the church having been preserved, it is uncertain how long this pastor lived; but it is said that Mr. Baruch Nowell, who was probably his successor, came to Dorchester in 1689.* Mr. Nowell is mentioned by Mr. John Fox, in the interesting "memoirs of himself" published in the Monthly Repository, and quoted in my account of the Plymouth congregation.† The following passage refers to a

the most prominent events of the reign of Charles the Second—the passing of the Act of Uniformity—the proceedings in reference to the pretended Popish plots—the famous decree of the University of Oxford on the day of the execution of Lord Russell, followed by the expulsion of Mr. Locke. Witness also the conduct of James the Second on the eve of Monmouth's invasion—his hypocrisy in pretending to uphold the Church of England while secretly endeavouring to bring back Popery—his attempt to force episcopacy upon the people of Scotland at the expense of the blood of thousands of upright and conscientious men—and his sanction of the iniquitous persecutions carried on against the Dissenters at every assizes, at every court in the kingdom. Those who censure the early Nonconformists for joining the standard of Monmouth should particularly remember the treatment which Baxter, their learned, exemplary, and eminent teacher, experienced at the hands of Jefferies; they should remember how this venerable man was convicted against evidence by a packed jury—how a judge in the confidence of the king loaded him with the coarsest reproaches, called him sometimes in derision a saint, and sometimes in plainer terms an old rogue, classed him with the infamous Oates, who had been lately convicted of perjury, and charged him with being the principal incendiary in a design to ruin the king and nation. For my own part, when I reflect on these things, I feel that I should be ashamed of my ancestors,—of the founders of the Dissenting Churches in the West of England, if they had not, with such insufferable provocations, acted upon the righteous maxim,—*rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God.*

* This information was derived from the report of two or three old members who were living in 1773, and recorded by the Rev. A. Edwards, one of the later ministers. See an account found among his papers and sent after his death to the Mon. Rep., O. S., Vol. xxi. p. 629.

† In Mr. Fox's papers the name is Howell. The first letter may be

tour he had made with Mr. Gilling, of Newton, that gentleman having been obliged to leave home in disguise in consequence of a process out against him for keeping a Latin school, contrary to the Schism Act, and young Fox having been ordered by his father to accompany him to London, for the double purpose of seeing the world and being made orthodox:

"I knew nothing of the bargain at first, and therefore I set out highly delighted with the prospect of an agreeable ramble, and of seeing new things and new places. We left Plymouth in the beginning of March, 1712. We got to Tavistock the first day, and the next day to a farmer's house near Tiverton. From thence we skulked through by and cross roads to Honiton, and so on till we got clear of the county of Devon and the bailiffs who were in pursuit of us. The first halt we made was at Dorchester, where Mr. Gilling was acquainted with one Mr. Howell, minister of the Dissenters in that place. Here we spent two or three days very agreeably, for he was a man of good sense and of generous principles. He was easy and genteel in his conversation, well acquainted with mankind and the world, and was well known and respected, and yet the most disagreeable preacher I ever heard in my life. He seemed to think much the same way I did about creeds, articles, and high priests, and

easily mistaken in illegible writing. That the two writers, Fox and Edwards, alluded to the same person, is evident from the agreement of their account in all other particulars.

seemed very far from offering arguments in favour of the ministry. I remember Mr. Gilling preached for him one part of Sunday, and on Monday appeared in the public Coffee in his lay habit and long wig, to the very great diversion of many who had seen him in a different dress and character the day before." *

Mr. Nowell was minister at Dorchester fifty years. He died in 1739 of the small pox, with the symptoms of which he was taken ill in the pulpit, where he fell back while preaching. His friends carried him home, and in a few days the disease proved fatal. He was succeeded by Mr. Kettle, a native of Evesham, who, after officiating six or seven years, removed to Worcester, where he spent the greater part of his life. At Dorchester he was intimate with a neighbouring gentleman, who, among various marks of regard, offered him some good preferment in the Church of England, provided he would conform. Mr. Kettle's refusal was the more praiseworthy, as his tastes, manners, and attainments would have rendered the advantages of such a situation peculiarly valuable to him. After his removal, the congregation were left for some time dependent on occasional supplies, owing, it is supposed, to doctrinal differences among the members. At length they chose Mr. Benjamin Spencer, who was probably educated at one of the London Academies, and settled at no other place than Dorchester, where he died of a dropsy in 1755, at the early

* Mon. Repos., Vol. xvi. p. 132.

age of twenty-eight. Nearly as short was the career of his successor, Mr. Samuel Phillips, whose father was at the same time minister at Poole, and who was taken off, by a fever, in 1761, in the thirty-second year of his age. The writer of the sketch already quoted says that on more than one occasion he heard the names of Spencer and Phillips mentioned in terms of respect by some of the old members of the society. In the year 1762, Mr. Timothy Lamb became the pastor; he also died before he had arrived at the meridian of life, having for some years been greatly afflicted by hereditary gout. Mr. Lamb was succeeded by Mr. Abel Edwards, who had been his assistant two years previously. In 1771, this gentleman removed from Dorchester to Nailsworth, to supply a congregation in that neighbourhood for six months. About the time of Mr. Lamb's death, Mr. Edwards received unanimous invitations from both places. He preferred going to Dorchester, was ordained there in 1772, resigned his office in 1813, and died at the age of seventy-eight, in 1826. He was succeeded by Mr. Treleaven, who spent four years as minister of this congregation. Mr. Edwards left directions in writing that no memorial of him should be recorded. The sketch in which this modest injunction is communicated is thus concealed: "The present minister is the Rev. Lewis Lewis, who pursues his labours amongst an affectionate people with great acceptableness, and it is their earnest wish that his connexion with them may extend to a period as pro-

tracted as was the ministry and life of his highly and universally respected predecessor."

Of the meeting-house Mr. Edwards has given the following account: "This is a decent building, measuring fifty feet long and forty broad. It was erected in or about the year 1720. There was before that time a meeting-house in what was then, and still is, termed the Friary, whence the congregation removed to Pease Lane. The edifice here, when first raised, had a double roof, tiled, and supported by two large and heavy looking brick pillars, in which state it remained many years. At length, however, in the year 1808, the timbers of every description, notwithstanding several previous repairs, were found to be so much decayed, that it became necessary to take down the whole roof and put on another. The new roof is single, covered with lead, and nearly flat, having a sky-light dome in the centre, which has a pleasing effect. At the same time the massy pillars, being no longer wanted, were removed, and sashes were substituted for casements, besides various other alterations and improvements, made at a considerable expense, so as to render this place of worship upon the whole both neat and convenient. It is accommodated with a vestry, a vestry library, a small gallery, and an organ." There is a small burial-ground attached to the chapel, and several persons were formerly buried in it; but it is now seldom used for that purpose. Three of the ministers, Mr. Spencer, Mr. Phillips, and Mr. Lamb, are interred in the aisle opposite the

pulpit. They rest in the same grave, over which is a plain stone, merely recording their names, the time of their death, and their respective ages.

We have little information respecting the opinions of this society. Mr. Benn's published works were "A Vindication of the Christian Sabbath against the Jewish," and "Sermons concerning Soul-prosperity."* The latter were published after his death by his assistant and successor, Mr. Churchill, of whom nothing further is recorded. From Mr. John Fox's notice of Mr. Nowell's liberality, we may infer that the congregation were by no means "highly orthodox" during his protracted ministry. "He seemed to think (says this writer) much the same way as I did about creeds, articles, and high priests, and seemed very far from offering arguments in favour of the ministry," that is, of Fox's engaging in it with his views on the subject of subscription. The declension, as many would call the gradual adoption of milder and more rational views of the Gospel, continued under the services of Mr. Nowell's successors. In the time of Mr. Edwards, both pastor and people proceeded from moderate Calvinism to low Arianism. The congregation have since become decidedly Unitarian.

The institutions supported by this society are a Sunday-school of boys and girls, and a chapel library. The latter was formed soon after Mr. Lewis's settlement at Dorchester, and now contains nearly four hundred volumes.

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 450.

Ministers.

William Benn, M. A..	1662—1680.
Joshua Churchill	1662—1689.
Baruch Nowell	1689—1739.
James Kettle	1739—1746.
Benjamin Spencer	1748—1755.
Samuel Phillipps	1755—1761.
Timothy Lamb....	1762—1772.
Abel Edwards	1772—1813.
Benjamin Trelleaven	1813—1817.
Lewis Lewis.....	1817.

The Rev. William Benn, M. A., of Queen's College, Oxford, was an eminent divine, famous in all the West of England. He was some time preacher at Oakingham, in Berkshire, and afterwards chaplain to the Marchioness of Northampton. From this situation he was removed by the interest of the celebrated Mr. John White, called the Patriarch of Dorchester, where he continued, in great reputation, Rector of Allhallows, till he was ejected. He was not satisfied with constantly labouring at the church, but preached on a week-day to the prisoners in the jail, which was in his parish, and caused a chapel to be built within the prison walls, principally at his own expense. He was richly furnished with all ministerial abilities; his perseverance in prayer was unparalleled; he prayed in his study seven times a day: and it was his custom at stated seasons to give God thanks for certain deliverances from danger which befel him. He died in 1680, having been a faithful and successful labourer in the Christian vineyard more than fifty years.*

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 456.

The Rev TIMOTHY LAMB was born at Wimborn, in Dorsetshire. His academical studies were pursued in London under Dr. Marryatt.* Soon after they were finished, he accepted an unanimous invitation from the congregation in Deadman's Place. There he was ordained, and there, for some years, he discharged the duties of the pastoral office with general acceptance. He removed to Dorchester, by the advice of his friends, with the hope that country air would improve his health, which had suffered much from attacks of gout. In this respect he was disappointed: yet his afflictions were not without a useful tendency. Few persons could have a larger share of bodily sufferings than he had, and few could be more patient under them. His sermons were supposed to be peculiarly adapted to meet the cases of the afflicted. Mr. Lamb's ministerial endowments were respectable; and though obliged to sit constantly in the pulpit, there was an earnestness in his strain of preaching which served to engage attention and to enforce what he delivered. His integrity was unquestionable; he was generous to the full proportion of his limited means; a kind husband, an affectionate father, a sincere and steady friend. Mr. Lamb's only publication, besides contributions to the Christian Magazine, and a poetical effusion composed at the age of fifteen, was a sermon entitled "The Words of Knowledge."

* Such is the statement in the Monthly Repository. Mr. Wilson represents Mr. Lamb as placed, first under the care of the Rev. S. Reader at Wareham, and afterwards at the Academy in London conducted by Dr. Jennings and Dr. Savage. Wilson's Hist., Vol. iv. p. 204.

WAREHAM.

WAREHAM is situated on a peninsula formed by the rivers Frome and Piddle, near their confluence with the waters of Poole Harbour. The true etymology of Wareham is probably from *Vara-ham*, a habitation on a fishing shore.

The town is built on a rising ground, and forms almost a long square. The buildings are mostly constructed of brick: the streets are spacious and open, intersecting each other at right angles. The area on which it stands is computed at one hundred acres, and is inclosed, except on the south side, by a high rampart, or wall of earth. The space between this wall and the town was anciently occupied by houses, the foundations of which still remain. At present it consists chiefly of extensive garden-grounds.

Wareham had formerly eight churches, three only of which remain. That dedicated to the Holy Trinity is reputed the Mother-Church, but does not contain any thing remarkable. St. Martin's is an ancient structure, neatly fitted up. The principal church in the town is St. Mary's, a lofty fabric, and, with the exception of Sherborne and Wimborn, the most spacious and ancient in the county

The port of Wareham was formerly considerable. It had once a Court of Admiralty: the quay lies on the south side of the town; a large part of the trade consists in the exportation of pipe clay, vast quantities of which are obtained from the pits round the town; and nearly ten thousand tons are annually shipped for London, Hull, Liverpool, Glasgow, &c., for the supply of the various potteries. This clay is of considerable use in the composition of Staffordshire ware.—BRITTON and BRAYLEY.

Population in 1811,—1709; in 1821,—1931; in 1831,—2325.

UNITARIAN CHAPEL.

A SOCIETY of Nonconformists sprang up at Wareham in those times of persecution to which so many references are made in this volume. Mr. Chaplyn was ejected from the parish by the Act of Uniformity; but it is not said that he preached afterwards, either in the town or neighbourhood. When he was silenced he had eight children; and it being necessary that something should be done for their support, Mrs. Chaplyn engaged, successfully, in a malting business.*

We are told that Mr. Clark, the son-in-law of an ejected minister in Wiltshire, was the first Dissenting minister at Wareham.† The other particulars of the early history of the old Nonconformist society, it does not come within my plan to relate, the members being *now* Trinitarian. My object is to furnish an account of the origin of the Unitarian congregation, the leading members of which belonged, until lately, to the original place of worship. I shall select from the correspondence, on both sides, those circumstances which appear to have been al-

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 475. † Ibid., Vol. ii. p. 505.

most unanimously considered as mainly instrumental in bringing about the present state of things.

For very many years the congregation ranked under the denomination of Presbyterian.* Mr. Kell, the minister at the close of the last century, and who is still living at Birmingham, was an Arian. He was succeeded by Mr. Thomas, a gentleman recommended by Mr. Manning, an Arian minister at Exeter. "His sentiments (said Mr. M., in his letter to the congregation) entirely coincide with your present minister's—Mr. Kell's."† Mr. Thomas filled the office twenty-two years;—in 1822 he resigned; and in the following year he died at Thickthorn, near Ilminster.‡ During the latter part of his life he possessed some peculiarities of opinion which prevented his classing himself decidedly with any party. Yet he was on terms of religious fellowship with Unitarians; he generally attended the meetings of their associations, and not those of the "orthodox." He certainly preferred Watts's Hymns, but he frequently altered or omitted their Calvinistic phraseology; and he invited Trinitarian ministers to his pulpit, but they never returned the compliment.

During the ministry of Mr. Thomas, as well as that of his predecessor, some of the oldest and most opulent members of the congregation were Antitrinitarians. These were the descendants of persons who, for generations, had been the chief sup-

* Mon. Repos., N. S., Vol. iii. p. 207. † Ibid., p. 437.
‡ Obituary of Mr. Thomas, Mon. Repos., O. S., Vol. xviii. p. 605.

porters of the Presbyterian interest at Wareham. But some years before the resignation of Mr. Thomas, their influence began to be diminished, in consequence of the exertions of a Calvinistic gentleman who had lately settled in their town and married a lady of the congregation. This gentleman approving many of the sentiments of the minister, and being related to several of the members, attended the chapel, and was anxious to be appointed a Trustee, though he knew there were strong objections to his filling the office. At a meeting in 1818, on perceiving some hesitation on the part of his fellow-worshipers, he said, "If I am not worthy a place in your trust, I will not occupy one in your church and congregation." The appeal was successful;—he was admitted.*

From this time the new Trustee was active in diffusing his own religious opinions. He circulated tracts of an orthodox tendency among the young; and when opportunities offered, introduced Trinitarian ministers to the pulpit. Various other charges were made against him, the most important of which was, that he practised great duplicity in endeavouring to deprive the Unitarians of their place of worship.

These charges were denied; a long letter, in reply to them, was published in the Monthly Repository, and another letter, substantiating them, quickly followed. That they were made without foundation, it is difficult to believe; we are disposed

* Mon. Repos., N. S., Vol. iii. p. 346.

to make every allowance for, nay, to admire, the *Christian* zeal of one who believes he is opposing the progress of dangerous error,—but further we cannot go. After Calvinism had gained the ascendancy, the gentleman who had laboured to promote it called on a Unitarian in the district, to justify his conduct.—"Have you acted in a kind and charitable manner?" was the question. The "orthodox" Trustee answered, "If I had done as much for Unitarianism as I have for Calvinism, you would have felt differently."—"I might have *felt* differently," said the Unitarian, "though I never, under any circumstances, could have considered such conduct becoming either a Christian or a gentleman."*

For some time after this change, the Unitarian section of the society continued to occupy the places of their forefathers in the old meeting. It was hoped that, as there was already a Calvinistic congregation in the town with whom the others might worship, the new party would at length yield. But this was not the case; the Unitarians were compelled to withdraw and form themselves into a distinct society; and on the first Sunday in the month of February, 1828, though but a small flock and without a pastor, they commenced assembling together in a temporary place of worship, opened by the Rev. J. Mitchelson, of Poole, with the hope that, under the Divine blessing, their numbers would increase, and their spiritual wants be supplied. They were not disappointed; at first the

* Mon. Repos., N. S., Vol. iii. p. 438.

house was kept open by the reading of one of the members and by the services of neighbouring ministers; for the space of three months the congrega- was favoured with the services of Mr. Kell, one of the former pastors; and at the close of a year they had the services of a settled pastor, Mr. Henry Squire, from the York College. A large proportion of the congregation were, at this period, of the poorer classes;* they had read, with attention and with understanding, various tracts which had been put into their hands; they had searched the Scriptures for themselves, and recovered from the alarm which their Calvinistic friends had excited respecting the supposed dreadful tendency of Unitarianism; they had found in the doctrines every where spoken against, a rich supply for their greatest wants as erring and sinful, yet rational and accountable creatures.

Finding themselves thus encouraged, the leading members of the new society contemplated the erection of a commodious place of worship. Meanwhile, various steps were taken to allay the irritation which had been occasioned by the retirement of the Unitarians from the old chapel. The gentleman who had made the charge of duplicity against the "orthodox" trustee offered to meet him for the purpose of proving it, which offer he thought fit to decline. Then, the Association of Independent Ministers for the county of Dorset proposed that three members of their body should meet three sub-

* Mon. Repos., N. S., Vol. iii. p. 212.

scribers to the Southern Unitarian Fund.* This proposal was received in a spirit of conciliation, but not acceded to, because the charge had not been made against a congregation, but against an individual; and because the Association, by holding a meeting in the old chapel at Wareham and assisting at the ordination of its new minister, had prejudged the question. Other reasons were also assigned of equal weight; the Calvinistic arbitrators, however, thought proper to meet, examine evidence, and publish their opinion. Their number was reduced to two by illness; these confessed, in substance, that the statements before them were only ex-parte; it would be wrong, therefore, to attach much importance to their published opinion as to the right of the present occupants of the place to their possession of it, and as to the *meritoriousness* of the efforts of the individual whose conduct had been arraigned.† Thus ended this unfortunate affair.—I have entered more fully into the details of it than my inclination prompted, for two reasons,—it appeared right to record on the pages of a history of the Western Churches a few particulars of one instance of the loss, to the Unitarians, by the non-appointment of suitable Trustees, of the chapels in which they and their ancestors had been accustomed to worship. I presumed, also, that I might be allowed to remind such of my readers as may be placed in similar circumstances, that, whether they claim rights which

* Mon. Repos., N. S., Vol. iii. p. 888. † Ibid., Vol. iv. p. 137.

they do not possess, or defend those which they have long enjoyed,—the highest considerations are fairness, kindness, candour, charity, the preservation of a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.

While the provincial associations were considering the proceedings of the past, the new congregation were energetically preparing for the future. Mr. Squire's zealous and judicious exertions having been attended with gradually increasing success, the members of his flock commenced the erection of a place of worship. This was accomplished at an expense of about £1500., which, with a trifling exception, was defrayed by five or six of the persons who had been accustomed to worship in the old meeting. On Wednesday, the twenty-ninth of September, 1830, the new building was opened by a public religious service; the devotional part was conducted by the Rev. M. Maurice, of Southampton, and the sermon, which is justly characterised as eloquent and impressive, was delivered by the Rev. R. Aspland, of Hackney.* During this service the chapel was well filled; but in the evening, when the working classes had finished their daily labour, the aisles were crowded, and many were prevented by want of room from hearing another discourse by Mr. Aspland on the delightful nature of the Divine

* This sermon has been published. The text is singularly appropriate; 1 Cor. iv. 13: "Being defamed, we intreat." The arguments must make a deep impression on all who are desirous of exercising that charity which "thinketh no evil."

assurance that the blessings of knowledge, liberty, and religious truth shall be handed down from one generation to another to the end of time.*

The results of the animating proceedings of the day were highly gratifying. A considerable addition was soon made to the number of permanent members of the society. About six months after this event they lost their first pastor, Mr. Squire,—that gentleman having removed to Yarmouth in compliance with an encouraging congregational invitation. His place at Wareham was filled by Mr. Wallace, who had previously discharged ministerial duties at Totness, York Street, (London,) Preston, and Brighton. This gentleman is still the pastor of the Wareham congregation, and has the happiness of seeing the cause which, in its infancy, had to struggle with so many difficulties, maintain an honourable position and acquire increasing respect and attachment.

They have a chapel library of three hundred volumes and a Sunday-school of forty children.

* Mon. Repos., N. S., Vol. iv. p. 869.

POOLE.

A TOWN and county of itself, deriving its name from the bay or pool on the north side of which it is situated. It stands on a peninsula connected by a narrow isthmus with the main land. Being on the borders of a wide, desolate heath, and on an unsheltered shore, it has a dreary and bleak appearance. The peninsula is three quarters of a mile long, and half a mile wide; and within that compass are three or four considerable streets, running nearly north-east and south-west.

The borough of Poole is very ancient, as appears from William Long-espe granting a number of privileges to the burgesses both by land and by sea on payment of seventy marks. His charter was confirmed by William Montacute, who changed the office denominated, in the former charter, Præpositus, into Mayor. Other liberties were afterwards given and confirmed to the town by different monarchs; but for its most considerable privileges, Poole is indebted to Elizabeth. This sovereign incorporated and made it a free town, and, after adding other immunities, directed it to be formed into a distinct county, and to appoint its own Sheriff, &c., in the same manner as the town and county of Southampton.—BRITTON and BRAYLEY.

Population in 1811,—4816; in 1821,—6390; in 1831,—6459.

OLD MEETING, HILL STREET.

NONCONFORMITY did not excite attention at Poole so early as at many other places. Mr. Samuel Hardy was ejected from the parish, but not until twelve or fourteen years after the passing of the Act of Uniformity. He was the minister at Poole during this interval, and, being a liberal man, it is probable that no society of Nonconformists was even secretly formed in the town while he remained in the Established Church.

The particulars of Mr. Hardy's life illustrate the history of the times. He was dismissed from Wadham College, when about to take the degree of Master of Arts, because he would not take the oaths. He then went to Charminster, a peculiar, belonging to the family of Trenchards, and excluded, by this circumstance, from all episcopal jurisdiction. The minister here was a kind of chaplain to his patrons; and by their influence and a little conformity, such as reading the creed, lessons, commandments, scripture sentences, and prayer for the king, Mr. Hardy was protected from the neighbouring justices.*

When he had lived at Charminster a considerable

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 466.

time, the inhabitants of Poole invited him to that living, which was also a peculiar. Here, however, though he preached, prayed, and conversed in the same manner as before, his situation was more hazardous. The public duties he was required to perform, as pastor of the flock, were regarded by the rigid Conformists in the neighbourhood as traps either for his conscience or his personal safety. On one occasion he was desired to baptize a child;—if he had used the form in the Common Prayer Book, he would have deserted his principles; if he had not used it, and yet performed the ceremony, he would have been ejected; he escaped by inducing a clerical friend to act as his substitute.

But Mr. Hardy was too obnoxious to be always allowed to discharge his duty in his own way. After various attempts had been made, in vain, to detect him acting illegally, a commission was appointed to try his title to Poole. Three bishops were included, but they refused to act in any proceeding that might appear prejudicial to the authority of their own courts. The country gentlemen, however, were willing both to act and to convict. They appointed a sermon, before which the clerk set a psalm, and the minister went into the pulpit without using the Common Prayer. This was enough; they discarded him without further ceremony, and he was obliged to quit the town immediately. He removed to Badsley, where he continued two years in the pastoral office, meeting with

much trouble for not conforming to the canons. After this he never preached in public.

Mr. Hardy's dismissal, which took place about the year 1674, probably occasioned the establishment of a church of Nonconformists at Poole. Their first minister appears to have been Mr. John Wesley—also an ejected minister, the son of Mr. Bartholomew Wesley, of Charmouth, and the grandfather of the celebrated founder of Methodism. On the passing of the Act of Uniformity, he was Vicar of Whitchurch, in Dorsetshire, from which place he removed to Melcomb, but was quickly driven thence by an order from the corporation against his settlement under heavy penalties. Mr. Wesley then visited Bridgwater, Ilminster, and Taunton; in these towns he met with great kindness from Dissenters of the three denominations; and, encouraged by them, he preached almost every day in the various places which he visited. At length, a gentleman who had a very good house at Preston, two or three miles from Melcomb, gave him leave to occupy it rent-free; and it was while he resided here that the Nonconformists at Poole chose him to be their pastor. In this relation he continued as long as he lived.*

Mr. Wesley probably officiated in a retired room or some obscure detached building. Although full of Christian courage when circumstances required it, he deemed it right to avoid publicity while the

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 484.

times were unsettled. The present place of worship, which is situated in Hill Street, was built in 1705, —it is presumed for Mr. Madgwick, who was very popular, and seems to have succeeded Mr. Wesley. The congregation flourished to such a degree that, in 1721, it was necessary to enlarge the building, which is now fifty feet square, having a double roof supported by four pillars in the centre. It has a substantial appearance, and is kept in good order, partly by means of a small endowment for that purpose, (the only one in possession of the congregation,) bequeathed by a lady during the ministry of the Rev. A. Bennet. In the year 1817, a small organ was presented to the chapel by Mr. William Young, of Kingston, Jamaica; and about the same time a congregational library was formed at the suggestion of Mr. Bennet. There is a small burying-ground attached to the meeting-house. In the interior of the building, over the pulpit, is a marble slab, with the following inscription:

To the memory of Joseph Stephenson, who for forty-five years, during which he filled the office of Clerk of this meeting, manifested a steady attachment to the cause of Religious Liberty, the Right of Private Judgment, and the practice of Rational Religion. His Frailties—for frailties he had, (and who is perfect?) lie humbled in the dust. To commemorate his virtues, and as a monument of their respect and esteem, this Tablet is inscribed by the congregation. He succeeded his Father as Clerk in the year 1766, and died on the 19th of July, 1810, aged 87 years.*

* Communicated, with many other particulars, by Mr. Naish, of Poole.

Mr. Madgwick died in March, 1734. He seems to have had a colleague in Mr. Matthew Towgood, who settled at Poole in 1729, but soon relinquished the ministry and engaged in business. In 1735, Mr. Thomas Rowe filled the pastoral office at Poole; how long he remained I cannot ascertain. He was succeeded by Mr. Hayward, who removed to London in 1752. Then came Mr. Phillipps, the father of the minister of the same name at Dorchester. In his time the congregation presented the singular scene of being, as Unitarians consider, in advance of their pastor in seeking and finding religious truth. He continued among them till the beginning of the year 1758, when the diversity of sentiment which had long existed rose to such a height as to occasion a division of the society. "The pastor (says my informant) had advanced doctrines not congenial with the opinions of the more moderate of his hearers, who also happened to be the majority, and he maintained them in a manner so disgusting, that, after much indecorous altercation, he was locked out of the pulpit, and his adherents followed him."

Mr. Phillipps was succeeded by Mr. Howel, who removed to Poole from Enfield, and afterwards settled at Yeovil and Bridgwater. He was a man of good sense, liberal mind, and moderate sentiments; and for some years the congregation continued large. It was now at the summit of its prosperity; Mr. Howel's ministry was well attended and highly appreciated; but at length his mild

and sensible discourses were discovered to be less attractive than the fervid preaching of the orthodox. His hearers gradually diminished; and his stipend being consequently reduced, he found it necessary, in 1782, to remove to Yeovil, where he had greater prospects of usefulness and better means for the support of his family. A similar account might be given of many Presbyterian congregations at this period. Their ministers had not only adopted Arian or Unitarian sentiments, but had acquired, in not a few instances, greater intellectual refinement than their immediate predecessors. Some happily deemed these acquisitions perfectly compatible with great earnestness in the discharge of their pulpit and pastoral duties, and with a style of of preaching doctrinal as well as practical, evangelical as well as rational. The majority, however, though possessed of good talents, and though eminently useful by their private examples and literary labours, did not accommodate themselves to the wants and wishes of the age. They persisted in composing and *reading* sermons which could only be admired by the select few; and hence the numerical declensions which mark the history of the Presbyterians at the close of the last century. May their successors, especially those who are young, pursue a different course; may they remember that the Gospel is designed to be preached to all, and that he is most worthy to be called a Christian minister who values intellectual treasures chiefly as they enable him to reach, reform, and elevate the

poor and ignorant in common with the wealthy and enlightened!

Mr. Howel's successor at Poole was Mr. Evan Davies, who, being a gentleman of some property, was able to settle here. During the first years of his ministry the society increased; but afterwards it again diminished, and, in 1794, Mr. Davies accepted an invitation to Lewes. The next was Mr. William Lamport, during whose residence at Poole there was once more a considerable improvement. Soon after the settlement of this gentleman, a service was conducted, the particulars of which, as such forms then began to be disused among the English Presbyterians, may be copied into this work.

"The Rev. W. Lamport, son of the late ingenious W. Lamport, of Honiton, having officiated about eighteen months to the congregation in the old meeting-house at Poole, much to the satisfaction of his hearers, at their request was solemnly committed to the blessing of God in the full discharge of his pastoral duties, on Wednesday, June 22, 1796. T. Howe, of Bridport, began by prayer and reading suitable portions of Scripture, with a brief comment. S. Fawcett offered up the general intercessory prayer for all states and conditons of men. J. Manning, of Exeter, preached from 2 Cor. xiii. 8: "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth;" proving that all the attempts of unbelievers had turned out, and were likely to turn out, to the furtherance of the gospel, by drawing forth convincing defences. J. Cornish, of Colyton, explained the design of the present meeting, proposed to the young minister certain questions relating to his ideas of Christianity, the Reformation, and his reasons for engaging in the work of the ministry amongst Dissenters, and then commended him in prayer to the favour and

blessing of the Almighty, in the connexion he had formed. J. Horsey, of Northampton, delivered a charge from John xxi. 15, shewing that a sincere love to Christ would lay the best foundation for fidelity and diligence in a preacher of the gospel; and R. Kell, of Wareham, concluded with prayer and a benediction. Suitable psalms and hymns were read by J. Jeffries, of Ringwood, at the proper intervals for singing. A very numerous, attentive audience, comprising members of the Establishment and other denominations, expressed their approbation of the manner in which the whole service was conducted, and several ministers, besides those engaged, expressed their friendly regards by attending. *

In 1804, Mr. Lamport removed to Lancaster, and left no successor in the pastoral office at Poole. The service was then conducted with much propiety and praiseworthy zeal by Mr. John Elson, a young member of the congregation. By this means the chapel was kept open every Lord's day for sixteen months, at the end of which Mr. Seaward accepted an invitation, and was also regularly ordained. The writer of an account of this service† remarks, that "the highly respectable members of the congregation had for a series of years eminently distinguished themselves as the friends of civil and religious liberty." Mr. Seaward resigned in 1815; and another member of the congregation—Mr. Thomas Lamport, undertook to lead the devotions and promote the moral and religious improvement of the flock. His services were respectably, though not numerously attended till the early part of the

* P. D. M., Vol. iii. p. 279.

† Mon. Repos., O. S., Vol. ii. p. 558.

year 1817, when Mr. Bennett removed to Poole from Ditchling. At the commencement of his ministry, he proposed the establishment of a chapel library, which was immediately assented to. The successors of Mr. Bennett have been Mr. Mitchelson and Mr. Rowntree, both of Manchester College, York. Mr. Mitchelson left Poole to accept an invitation from Diss. The congregation is still small; but it contains elements favourable to its growth. Among those at present connected with the congregation are two descendants of its earliest benefactor —the gentleman who gave the ground on which the older part of the building stands.* Others there are who cherish the memories, and are disposed to profit by the examples, of those friends to truth, freedom, charity, and holiness, who have worshiped in this place.

Besides the chapel library there is a Sunday-school, and a collection of books for children.

Ministers.

John Wesley, M.A.	1674—
William Madgwick	—1734.
Matthew Towgood	1729—1735.
Thomas Rowe	1735—
Samuel Hayward	—1752.
Samuel Phillipps	1752—1758.
John Howel	1758—1782.
Evan Davies	1782—1794.

* Unit. Chron., No. xv. p. 96.

WILLIAM LAMPORT	1795—1804.
ROGER SEAWARD	1805—1815.
ABRAHAM BENNETT	1817—1826.
JOHN MITCHELSON	1826—1834.
MARK ROWNTREE	1834.

ADDITIONAL PARTICULARS OF THE LIFE OF MR. HARDY.

After he left Badsley he was a private chaplain in Essex, whence he removed to Newbury, where he died in 1691. He won the regard and promoted the improvement of men of all classes by his Christian kindness and integrity. Several instances are on record of his courage and activity when the interests of his fellow-creatures were at stake. He once told a nobleman, Lord Brook, that men of high rank were the most unhappy in the world, because nobody dared tell them their faults, or shew them the right way to Heaven. His benevolence was manifested by his delight in doing good, and more particularly by his zeal in collecting nearly £500 for the purpose of redeeming captives from slavery. Nor did he deem it inconsistent with his office as a minister, to exert himself on important political occasions, and to throw his influence into the scale of honest independence, though at the risk of enduring the frowns of the powerful. While he was living at Poole, the inhabitants were called upon to choose a member of Parliament. The Earl of Shaftesbury, then Lord Chancellor, was very anxious to have his son elected; but Mr. Hardy opposed his lordship, and exerted himself successfully on behalf of Mr. Trenchard, whom he thought a fitter man. The Chancellor was incensed, and wrote a very angry letter to his opponent, but was soon afterwards reconciled to him in consequence of his own honest representations of the state of the case.*

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. ii. p. 467.

The Rev. J. Wesley, M.A.—This worthy ancestor of the founder of Methodism was educated at New Inn Hall, Oxford. His characteristics were not unlike those by which his celebrated grandsons were distinguished. He was zealous, serious, and diligent; willing to struggle with difficulties in the discharge of his duty, yet averse to plunge into needless danger. At the age of twenty-two, and in the year 1658, he was sent to preach at Whitchurch, in Dorsetshire. Soon after the Restoration, some of his neighbours persecuted him because he would not read the book of Common Prayer. He recorded in his diary two interesting conferences on this subject—one with the Bishop of Bristol, the other with Sir Gerard Napier, a country justice, by whom he had been imprisoned. These are interesting as shewing the opinions which were entertained at that period in reference to the necessary qualifications for the pastoral office, and the manner in which bishops and justices exercised their power. Mr. Wesley, by preaching privately after his ejectment, preserved his liberty longer than many of his brethren. Four ministers living in his neighbourhood determined on preaching with open doors, and were accordingly indicted at the next assizes for being present at riotous and unlawful assemblies; they were found guilty, fined forty marks each, and obliged to find security for their good behaviour. But all Mr. Wesley's caution could not save him from the effects of wicked laws; the Oxford Act obliged him to leave his family and his people; and after he returned he was imprisoned four times, and apprehended still more frequently. The sufferings, both of mind and body, to which he was exposed by the cruelty of the High-Church party, combined with other circumstances, produced an illness which terminated in his decease when he was only in the prime of life. Even then bigotry was not satisfied: the vicar of the parish in which he died, would not suffer his remains to be interred in the church.*

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. 4. p. 486.

Devonshire.

COLLUMPTON.

HONITON.

COLYTON.

SIDMOUTH.

LYMPSTONE AND GULLIFORD.

TOPSHAM.

EXETER.

CREDITON.

MORETON HAMPSTEAD.

TAVISTOCK.

PLYMOUTH.

DEVONPORT.

COLLUMPTON.

Collumpton, or Cullumpton, or Columbton, according to Risdon, is "the chiefest place on the river Culme, and was the King's demesne in the Saxon Heptarchy." Alfred bequeathed the manor to his son Ethelward, with other lands in the counties of Somerset and Hants.

The town consists principally of one long street, badly paved. Through this street passes the turnpike road from Bath and Bristol to Exeter. Many of the houses are well built; but the humbler dwellings are mostly constructed with cobb walls. The manufactures are of broad cloths, serges and kersymeres; but the former are not made in any considerable quantity.—Britton and Brayley.

Population in 1811,—2917; in 1821,—3410; in 1831,—3813.

UNITARIAN CHAPEL.

COLLUMPTON was one of the numerous places in Devonshire from which ministers were ejected in 1662. The sufferer here was Mr. Crompton, who continued many years among his people after he quitted his living. Once in five or six weeks the inhabitants were ministered to by Mr. Batt, who had been driven, by the Act of Uniformity, from the living of Riston, in Somersetshire.

Mr. Crompton preached in a dwelling-house some years after the Revolution.* About 1695, the congregation built a meeting-house which remained till 1815. In 1698, they chose for their pastor Mr. Richard Evans, who remained with them forty-five years. The register of baptisms was commenced by him on the day he first preached at Collumpton—April 10th, 1698. This was originally a private record begun by Mr. Evans, at Staverton, near Ashburton, January 6th, 1694. He obtained his certificate in 1695 at the Exeter Quarter Sessions, where he was registered as a "Dissenting minister in holy orders." Mr. Evans received the following letter of invitation:

* English Presbyterian, p. 181.

Collumpton, April 6th, 1698.

"*Reverend Sr*·,

"The good report we have heard of you hath induced us to give you the trouble of these lines, being destitute of a minister and many of our congregation are desirous to heare you preach among us. We resolve to look no more after Mr. Meade, and this is our general resolution, wherefore desire that you would be with us the next Lord's day and preach heere. Or ffriend Mr. Pearce can give you an account how our affaires stand heere. If you speake to Mr. Meade, you will find that Mr. Smith, of Collumpton, hath given him a full answer as to our resolution above written; soe we desire you will, if possible, be heere next Sabbath and you will much oblige yr assured lg ffriends,

"THOMAS SPIED,
"JAMES ARTNOLL,
"JOHN HARRIS,
"ANTH. CODNER."

"To Mr. Richard Evans,
Minister of the Gospell,
these presents."

With this invitation Mr. Evans complied; and his settlement at Collumpton was advantageous to the cause. In the early part of the last century the congregation was large; many people in the neighbourhood being in the habit of joining it. As to the opinions of Mr. Evans and his flock there is no information; from his only publication,—"A Tract on Holiness," it may be inferred that he was chiefly anxious to cultivate purity of heart and life. He died in 1743. During the next ten years, the society had several ministers. All appear to have

held liberal opinions and to have prepared their hearers for adopting Unitarianism. Mr. Morgan, who became the pastor in 1754, had been led to relinquish orthodoxy by the writings of Mr. Peirce, and proceeded even farther than that celebrated man.

The congregation declined in numbers towards the close of the last century. Many members had been previously removed by death without leaving families to supply their places; and about this period, other Dissenting chapels were erected in the neighbourhood. Then, however, a spirit of liberality prevailed in Collumpton, which was too soon extinguished. Soon after the establishment of Sunday-schools, many persons of various denominations were accustomed to meet on Sunday evenings, at the Presbyterian chapel. All the Sunday-scholars in the town assembled; Mr. Morgan conducted the devotional parts of the service, and some respectable layman read a practical sermon. There are some yet living, who entertain a pleasing recollection of these services, and who deeply regretted the spirit of bigotry which put a stop to them.

It is difficult for the young of the present day to form an adequate conception of the intemperate zeal against Dissenters, at the time of the French Revolution. A few, however, may have heard their aged friends speak of the dangers to which they were exposed. The following circumstance will tend to shew what our fathers had to encounter.

In the parish of Uffculme, near Collumpton, there was, at this time, a small meeting-house dedicated to the worship of one God, the Father. It is thus noticed by Polwhele: "Bridwell, in this parish, on which is a new mansion, is the pleasant seat of Richard Hall Clarke, Esq., who pulled down an old chapel (dedicated to St. Bridget or St. Bride, probably near some consecrated well called St. Bride's well,) and with the materials built a part of the present house; and at a little distance, he has also erected a Presbyterian or Unitarian chapel for himself and family."* This period being, with regard to religious proceedings in this country, that of another reign of terror, it was more than usually necessary that those who were averse to all spiritual usurpation, and friendly to a simple, earnest, and scriptural mode of worship, should unite for mutual support and the diffusion of truth. Accordingly, several young men, still among the consistent members of our churches, having no minister at their own place of worship, at Honiton, went every Sunday to the sequestered chapel at Bridwell. But so strong was the influence of ignorance and prejudice, that their steps were watched, their occasional calls on country friends misrepresented, and their praiseworthy efforts to excite a love of gospel truth stig-

* The Bridwell chapel, which has now been abandoned some years, was opened in 1792; a sermon on "The Promise of Christ's Presence with his Disciples" was preached by Dr. Toulmin, and afterwards published. The occasion was rendered remarkable by the circumstance, that the friends who assembled formed that useful institution—the Western Unitarian Society.

matized as attempts to circulate sedition and infidelity.

This spirit hastened the decline of the congregation at Collumpton. But a brighter time arrived, —a time when, though prejudice remained awake, persecution was asleep; and Mr. Morgan's successor did not fail to avail himself of it. Mr. Davis had been at Collumpton some years without an opportunity of doing much to diffuse his principles. At length he employed his energies judiciously and successfully; and it should be noted for the encouragement of others, (says a writer in the Monthly Repository,*) that, by unremitting endeavours, he lived to see the fruit of his labours. In 1823, he felt it his duty to attend in the vestry, on Wednesday evenings, to deliver lectures and to converse with any who might be sufficiently interested to hear what he had to advance in favour of his views of the gospel. For some time few came to be instructed; but, with peculiar steadiness, he held on in what he thought the path of duty, and his hearers became numerous. His last lecture, delived a few days before his death, was considered particularly interesting, and his auditors had then increased fourfold.

I have stated that the first meeting-house was built in 1695. In 1814 it was found to be so much decayed as to render further assembling in it dangerous; the congregation, therefore, took it down and erected another on the same site.† This building,

* Vol. xx. p. 52. † Mon. Repos., Vol. x. p. 721.

which, though smaller, is more commodious, was opened for public worship on the 29th of October, in the same year. Discourses were preached on this occasion, in the morning and evening by Dr. Carpenter, and in the afternoon by Mr. Davis. A tribute of gratitude was paid to the Wesleyan Methodists, who permitted the Unitarians to use their chapel, once each Lord's day, for some months. Adjoining the chapel are two school-rooms, of still more modern date, used for the religious instruction of about sixty boys and girls. The congregation also support a library, a fellowship fund, and a brotherly society.* These institutions have lessened the evils of ignorance and poverty, and strengthened the union that subsists among the worshipers. In promoting the happiness and improvement of this interesting society—their pastor, Mr. Yeates, has been lately assisted by Mr. N. S. Heineken, who was educated at York, and settled some years at Sidmouth.

The following inscriptions are in the chapel:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF THR REV. SAMUEL MORGAN, WHOSE REMAINS ARE INTERRED NEAR THIS SPOT, AND WHO, DURING 40 YEARS, WAS THE HIGHLY RESPECTED MINISTER OF THE CONGREGATION ASSEMBLING IN THIS PLACE. HE DIED ON THE 15th SEPTEMBER, 1794, IN THE 64th YEAR OF HIS AGE.

* Communicated with much other information by the Rev. M. L. Yeates, who describes the brotherly society as a fund for the relief of poor persons in sickness, supported by monthly contributions of two pence per month, from those who expect relief, and other sums from those who do not. At the monthly meeting, each subscriber, is at liberty to recommend any case that he knows to need relief. The Treasurer is authorized to advance, in case of emergency, what he deems right in the interval. The society has been established fourteen years, and has always worked well.

And also of Elizabeth, his wife,
who departed this life the 4th May, 1783, aged 38 years.
She was the youngest daughter of the learned and excellent Dr. Bennet Stevenson, for 37 years minister of a society of Protestant Dissenters, at Bath.
This tablet was erected in 1827, from a feeling of affectionate respect to the memory of her parents, by the daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth Morgan.

Emma Catherine,
the beloved wife of Nicholas Samuel Heineken,
and only surviving child of the Rev. Matthew Lee Yeates, minister of this congregation, died Nov. 12th, 1831, aged 24 years.
This tablet, too perishable for the record of her virtues, is erected as a tribute of affection by her bereaved husband.
"What is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

On two stones in the yard adjoining the chapel:

Here lieth the body of the Rev. Mr. Richard Evans, who departed this life 22nd July, 1743, in the 72nd year of his age. He was pastor of this congregation 45 years, "whose rejoicing was this, the testimony of a good conscience."

Sacred to the memory of the Rev. John Davis, who departed this life Dec. 16th, 1824, aged 62.
He was a native of Cardiganshire, and the faithful minister of this congregation during 28 years.
"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Ministers.

William Crompton, M. A.	1662—1696.
Richard Evans	1698—1743.
Robert Glass	1745—1746.
Thomas Chapman	1748—1751.
—— Hook.....	1751—1754.
Samuel Morgan	1754—1794.
John Davis.....	1794—1824.
Matthew Lee Yeates	1825.
Nicholas Samuel Heineken	1830.

The Rev. William Crompton was the son of a minister at Barnstaple. He was ejected from the living of Collumpton by the Act of Uniformity. He continued with his people, and spent many years among them, but without the encouragement he deserved. For some time before his death, which occurred in 1696, he was disabled by a painful disease from engaging in his beloved employment. The titles of his works indicate the subjects in which he felt peculiarly interested, as well as the general tastes of the Presbyterian congregations of that period. He published—A Remedy against Superstition.—A Brief Survey of the Old Religion.—Foundation of God for the Salvation of the Elect.—Sovereign Omnipotency, the Saint's Security.—A Treatise on Prayer; on James v. 16.—A Wilderness of Trouble Leading to a Canaan of Comfort.*

The Rev. Samuel Morgan was a native of Langamgamarck, in Brecknockshire. His father was more than forty

* Noncon. Mem.

years minister of the gospel at Lanurlyd. The subject of this memoir was born in 1731, and having received a classical education, entered the academy at Carmarthen in 1745. Here he was prepared, by the Rev. Evan Davies and the Rev. Samuel Thomas, for the ministerial office, on which he first entered at Dulverton. From this place he removed, in 1754, to Collumpton, where he spent the remainder of his life.

Mr. Morgan was educated in Calvinistic principles, and probably never doubted their truth till he read the controversy between Mr. Peirce and his opponents. The following sketch of his character appears in the Protestant Dissenters' Magazine:* —"His piety was fervent and unaffected, his integrity inflexible, and his morals irreproachable. The liberality of his mind rose superior to all party distinctions, and he embraced, as brethren, the whole rational creation of God. With fortitude and cheerfulness he sustained a lingering and painful disorder; and at last, with truly Christian dignity, he closed his eyes in peace in the sixty-fourth year of his age. He published 'A Common Prayer Book, according to the Plan of the Liturgy of the Church of England, with suitable services.'"

The Rev. JOHN DAVIS received the first part of his education in Carmarthenshire, under the learned Mr. David Davis. At the usual age he was sent to the academy at Carmarthen, then under the care of Rev. Robert Gentleman. Not being satisfied with his opportunities for improvement there, he soon afterwards entered at Daventry, where Mr. Belsham was the tutor. Although brought up in orthodoxy, he imbibed, in this seminary, the principles of Unitarianism; but not from Mr. Belsham, who was then a Calvinist, and deeply lamented the results of Mr. Davis's inquiries. He bore testimony, however, to the very exemplary conduct of his pupil.

On leaving Daventry, Mr. Davis settled in Cumberland, with a small and not very harmonious congregation. Here he

* Vol. i. p. 463.

remained some years, and discharged with much honour the duties of a minister and schoolmaster. So highly did one of his pupils esteem him, that up to the time of his death he delicately remitted him, twice a year, through a friend, a handsome donation, "lest his income should be too small for one in his delicate state of health." He probably removed from his first station to Collumpton without settling in any other place; and here he spent the remainder of his days, possessing the respect and promoting the happiness of all to whom he was known.

Mr. Davis's exertions in the cause of Christian truth have already been mentioned. These did not proceed from a sectarian spirit but from a calm, yet strong, conviction of the importance of the conclusions at which he had arrived. If he was anxious to make proselytes, he uniformly asserted that sound morality was the end of true religion, and regarded all opinions without it as "little worth and vain." One of his friends has remarked, that "neither the fear of man nor any wish to please him ever induced him to do that of which he did not approve,—he had all the firmness of Knox, without one grain of his ferociousness." He was a man of sound learning and great application, but never became a *popular* preacher. In domestic life, he was easy to be accommodated, considerate of the accommodation of others; quiet, peaceful, and courteous. The vigour of his mental powers and his increasing exertions to promote the welfare of his people, amidst the attacks of a disease which at length brought him suddenly to the grave, exemplified the Apostle's declaration "though the outward man faileth, the inner man is renewed day by day."

Of the higher parts of his character some idea may be formed from the following lines, which appeared in his favourite publication soon after his death.*

* Mon. Rep., Vol. xx. p. 236. See also p. 116. The lines have since been republished by the author, the Rev. J. Johns, of Crediton, in an elegant volume entitled "Dews of Castalie." London. Hunter. 1828.

THERE is many a harp for the young man's doom,
That is tuned to the notes of woe;
But alas! they are mute o'er the old man's tomb,
Though he lived like a saint below.

There is many a tear over beauty's grave,
And warm from the heart they rise;
Ah! why less warm are the tears that lave
The spot where the good man lies?

Is it nothing to keep the soul still young,
When the frame where it dwells grows old?
Or less should a beautiful life be sung,
Than the charms of an earthly mould?

No, old man, no,—one passing lay,
Though a powerless lay it be,
Shall be given to the thought of the silent clay,
Which is all that is left of thee.

Though thy life was passed in the humble shade,
Yet it brightened the shade around;
And every step that thy meek foot made,
Was made upon holy ground.

Thou hast seen thy friends around thee fall,
Thou hast lived through years of pain;—
And now thou hast reached the goal of all,
And broken a frail world's chain.

Oh! rest in peace till the day for which
Thou hast looked with a Christian's eye!
Faith, hope, and love, long have made thee rich
In the gold of a purer sky.

Though so soon forgot be thy lowly sod,
Yet thou hast not lived in vain;
For green above are the groves of God,
Where the just shall meet again!

HONITON.

"THIS towne claymes prioritie for antiquitie before many other. But for the name, yf I should say yt was taken from the abundance of *honye* there made or found, I persuade myself you would smyle; and yet that may not be altogether *sans* reason, in regard of the hills adjoyning, on which abundance of thyme or tyme growes, in which these pretye creatures are much delighted and feed most willingly theron." —WESTCOTE.

"This town is near three quarters of a mile in length, lying east and west; and in the midst there is one other street towards the south. It is a very pretty town, indifferently well built, and sweetly seated both for corn and pasture. Its market is on Saturday, well replenished with all such things as the country affordeth for necessaries; more plentiful, indeed, in victuals and corn than most other markets in the county."—Sir W. POLE.

"Honiton lies on the great western road from London to Exeter; seven miles west of Axminster, and to the east of Exeter about sixteen miles. Situated in a delightful vale upon a rising ground, on the south side of the river Otter, it commands a fine view of the circumjacent country. A little stream of transparent water flows through the town, with a dipping place at almost every door."—POLWHELE.

Population in 1811,—2735; in 1821,—3296; in 1831,—3509.

BRIDGE MEETING-HOUSE.

This house was built by a Baptist society. There was a congregation of the same class in the town as far back as 1655. George Fox, the Quaker, mentions his having some intercouse with it in that year. If it existed till the passing of the Act of Uniformity, it was probably united to the Presbyterian society which was formed here soon afterwards. In Crosby's History of the Baptists,* there is "a confession of the faith of several congregations of Christ in the county of Somerset, and some churches *in the counties near adjacent;* printed at London, Anno 1656." The brethren at Honiton had probably some concern in this document, which, it may be observed, although very copious, contains no declaration of belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, and in the present day would be generally considered as heterodox in other respects.

The next notice of Dissent in this town occurs in connexion with the year 1662. Mr. Francis Soreton, the rector of the parish, being unable to comply with the terms of the Act, was ejected. This learned and excellent man preached in Honiton,

* Appendix, Vol. i. p. 27.

occasionally, after his ejectment, countenanced and assisted by his fellow-sufferers, Mr. Hieron, of Feniton, and Mr. Saunders, of Kentisbeare. In the town and neighbourhood were many Nonconformists, some of them gentlemen of note, but they could not provide themselves with a place of public worship till King James's Indulgence was issued. They then fitted up the back-house of William Clarke, a chandler, and were served by Mr. Saunders, Mr. Malachi Blake, and Mr. Goswell of Exeter, who continued for some time to preach alternately with much success.*

The first stated minister of the Honiton Dissenters was Mr. John Edwards, a young man from Wellington. He was introduced on Mr. Goswell's discontinuing his attendance, and soon discovered an inclination to take the whole work upon himself, although Mr. Blake had been proposed as pastor. Mr. Edwards, being of a violent temper, soon destroyed that peace and harmony which had previously subsisted; and notwithstanding a friendly admonition from the Exeter Assembly, to whom the society appealed, he still acted so improperly, that Mr. Clarke declared he should preach in his house no longer. There was consequently a division; some of the members remained in their old place, and were supplied by ministers from Exeter, Chard, and Taunton, while Edwards and his party retired to a wood-house, where they assembled till a new building, which they instantly commenced, was

* English Presbyterian, p. 152.

completed. Things were in this situation a considerable time; at length, the conduct of Edwards becoming scandalously immoral, his party forsook him. He conformed to the Church of England, and preached at Northleigh, a small village about four miles from Honiton.*

In the year 1705, the two parties were united under Mr. John Ball, whose zeal, learning, and orthodoxy, made him one of the most celebrated divines in the West. He died in 1745, in the ninety-first year of his age, and was succeeded by Mr. John Rutter, of South Petherton, who was the settled minister till his own death, which took place in 1769. Mr. George Heath, then finishing his studies at Exeter, accepted an invitation to settle at Honiton in the following year; but he also soon lost many of his hearers, and ultimately his situation, by bad conduct. Another division ensued, which was probably hastened by differences on points of faith; one party inheriting the rigid Calvinism preached by Mr. Ball, the other shewing themselves favourable to those brighter views which were then becoming prevalent. The Calvinistic party seceded in 1771; at first they met in a licensed room; two years afterwards they began to build a place of worship, which gradually acquired, and is now known by, the name of Independent. About the same time, Mr. Stevens, of Great Marlow, became their minister. The other members of the original Presbyterian congregation remained in

* English Presbyterian.

their meeting-house, and enjoyed the services of Mr. W. Lamport till 1788. The building being old and dilapidated, was soon afterwards taken down by the consent of the only surviving Trustee, and many of the worshipers united themselves to the Baptist society, with whom they had long agreed on the highest points of Christian faith.

Of this society it is my chief object to give some account. In the year 1715, Mr. Jerom Maynard, manufacturer of serges, removed from Axminster to Honiton. He was a zealous Baptist, possessing Arian, if not Unitarian, views of the Gospel, and had for several years preached every Sunday to a Baptist society in the neighbouring parish of Dalwood. At the time of his removal, the number of persons in Honiton whose religious views coincided with his own did not exceed two or three, besides the members of his own family. These he brought together about the year 1721, when he ceased preaching at Dalwood. He invited the men and women employed in his work-shops to attend a religious service in his own house, and employed other means to increase the number of worshipers. His labours, temporal as well as spiritual, were so successful, that, in the year 1736, he determined on building a place of worship. To this object his thoughts had long been directed; and the people with whom he was connected, anxious to do all in their power to promote it, circulated the following appeal. I shall copy it from the original MS., as a specimen of the style and spirit of the founders of this church.

To all Christian and well-disposed persons, more especially to our brethren of the Baptized Churches to whom these presents may come: the humble petition and case of the Baptized Church at Honiton, in Devon, under the pastoral care of Mr. Jerom Maynard.

Beloved in our Lord,

After Christian salutation, we beg leave to inform you that the God of all grace, the Father of mercies, and the giver of every good and perfect gift, was pleased to stir up and excite our now worthy and beloved Pastor or Elder, some years since, (he being providentially brought to reside here,) to set up his worship (having no place where he believed the Gospel was preached in its primitive purity, near enough for himself and his family to attend) in his own dwelling house: in order to promote the Divine honour, and to instruct those of his own household and neighbourhood into the knowledge of the Gospel, and the Truth as it is in Jesus, as through grace it appeared to him, and this good and laudable undertaking has been constantly and we hope faithfully continued, and we trust has met with the blessing, countenance, and approbation of the Most High, to the great Joy and Consolation of our and others' souls, so that now, through divine goodness and mercy, we have a name and a place in the house of God and the Church of Jesus Christ, and as such we trust some have been added to us according to the order of the Gospel, who shall be saved in the day of the Lord, tho' we are of opinion that our spiritual increase has greatly been retarded for want of a convenient and separate place to assemble together in, the which therefore we for some time past have been and are now very desirous of obtaining. And as it has pleased Almighty God, under this his pious undertaking to bless our worthy Pastor aforesaid with some considerable increase in his worldly substance, altho' he preached constantly to us gratis, he has proposed to be very liberal in giving the Church the ground and a considerable sum towards erecting a house for God's worship: and when he dies, unless misfortunes

attend him, he proposes to leave something considerable for the support of the cause of Christ and the Truths of the Gospel in this place. Now we, the members of this little Christian Society, and those that attend amongst us as hearers, are in the general but Low in our worldly circumstances; but we that have been buried with Christ in Baptism humbly hope we have some blessed stock in Faith and a treasure in the Heavens; however, our present poverty renders us entirely incapable (contrary to our sincere desire) of enabling our Pastor to perform his pious intention of building a house for God's worship: but we are all willing to do our utmost, yea rather beyond than under our abilities, for the promoting so good, so desirable and so necessary a work, and for as much as the utmost we can do will fall very short of answering the end, it being proposed to build the house with brick, to cover it with tile, and to expend about £150, which sum as aforesaid we are utterly incapable to raise, and therefore we are obliged and humbly make bold to petition you, our brethren and Christian friends, that you w^d help and assist us, as we have and shall always be willing to do for others in the same or like case; by your charitable contributions for the completing this, we hope commendable design, and whosoever does so lend to the Lord and cast their temporal bread upon the waters, we trust our God will repay them a hundredfold in this world, and that in that to come they may find and share in eternal bliss and glory. We desire that what you are pleased to contribute to our assistance and we hope to God's Honour, you'll pay to our beloved brother Mr. John Sturch, or to our Pastor aforesaid, the which will lay us under lasting obligations to pray for your temporal and eternal felicity.

This document was signed by six members and five hearers. A Postscript was added, recording "the baptism of two hopeful young men." About £60. was collected at Taunton, Exeter, Crediton, Moreton-Hampstead, and Honiton. The remainder of the

expense appears to have been defrayed by Mr. Maynard himself. In 1737 the house was opened, having been duly licensed "for the said Mr. Maynard and others to perform there." The interior was fitted up to seat two hundred people. The zealous founder officiated himself as often as his strength would permit; but being advanced in life when the meeting-house was opened, he often required assistance. At that time the Presbyterian congregation at Shaugh in Luppit, about three miles from Honiton, was supplied chiefly by students from Mr. Amory's Academy, and they frequently officiated for Mr. Maynard.* Before his death, the congregation, being able to engage a settled minister, chose a Mr. Sprague, who remained till 1753; the time of his settlement is uncertain. He was succeeded by Mr. Wheeler, who left for America at the end of four years. Mr. Maynard then officiated for some time, though past his eightieth year, to the edification of a united and respectable congregation. The next supplies were Mr. Adams and Mr. Francis Webb, of whom distinct accounts will be given. It was during the ministry of Mr. Adams that the Presbyterian congregation divided; afterwards he frequently preached,

* The Luppit congregation has been many years extinct. The following list of its ministers appears in the appendix to a Discourse by Mr. Manning, of Exeter, delivered before the Annual Assembly, 1818.

Thomas Collier,	Nicholas Martin,
Thomas Holwell,	J. Lavington,
Robert Wood,	Nicholas Martin,
William West,	Dr. Harris.

Dr. Harris was the author of the Lives of the Stuarts.

in conjunction with Mr. Lamport, in the old place of worship. Mr. Webb's stay was short; that his services were successful is implied by the fact, that one member of his church who was engaged in a prosperous business—the Honiton Lace Manufactory—offered him one hundred pounds a year if he would remain at Honiton.

Mr. Webb left about the year 1780. From that time till 1787 the meeting-house was seldom opened, the society being able to worship with the Presbyterians. But on the death of Mr. Lamport they were desirous of having a pastor of their own, and accordingly applied to Dr. Caleb Evans, of the Bristol Academy. That gentleman recommended Mr. Stephen Freeman, who had nearly finished his studies, and was immediately chosen. Although educated in a Calvinistic academy, Mr. Freeman partook of the spirit of inquiry which prevailed among the students, and, before he left, became a decided Unitarian. This circumstance was satisfactory to the church; they had always confined their worship to One God—the Father—and were fully prepared to be led into what they now regard as "all truth." The services of Mr. Freeman were so acceptable, that the meeting-house was soon found too small. This may be partly attributed to the dissolution of the old Presbyterian society, many of whom, having imbibed new opinions under Mr. Lamport, became worshipers with the Baptists. There was, at that time, a large ladies' school at Honiton, consisting of members of the most respect-

able Dissenting families in the West; and these, to the number of seventy, attended Mr. Freeman's services. The people, thus encouraged, formed a plan of enlarging the building, which was promoted by Mr. John Maynard, who, inheriting his uncle's spirit as well as property, conveyed to the Trustees a piece of ground for the erection of an additional aisle and row of pews. They then made an application for the requisite funds, which proved partly successful; but owing to the resignation of Mr. Freeman, when he had been settled at Honiton three years,* and other unavoidable circumstances, the plan was not carried into execution till 1794. It was then deemed advisable to take down the whole of the house, but to leave the greater part of the foundations and to erect a new one, with a gallery, on the same spot. The expense amounted to £331. Of this sum £231 was subscribed by the congregation and their friends at a distance. The committee waited twelve months, and, seeing no prospect of additional assistance, paid the debt and the interest in equal shares.

On the resignation of Mr. Freeman, the congregation were supplied by ministers from a distance. In 1793 Mr. John Hughes became the pastor. In September 1794, he opened the present building. This gentleman was a Pædo-baptist—a circumstance regarded, when he was chosen, as comparatively unimportant. Two persons, who still survive, were

* Soon after Mr. Freeman's removal he opened a school at Enfield, where he still resides.

baptized during the ministry of Mr. Freeman. The congregation has been in much the same state, with regard to numbers, for many years. It has not flourished, but it has been united, and neither deficient in zeal nor unadorned by examples of moral and religious worth. Several young persons—descendants of those who founded and others who well supported the society—are growing up, it is hoped, to imbibe the spirit and tread in the steps of their fathers.

The meeting-house is situated near the bridge, at the entrance to the town from Exeter. It stands at some distance from the street, and the approach to it is under a large gateway. There is nothing attractive in its appearance; over the door is the date 1737; within the walls are a vestry, with a library, and a baptistery, supplied from the neighbouring river. Among the books are Fox's Book of Martyrs and Crosby's History of the Baptists, bequeathed by Mr. Maynard; and several valuable historical works of a more modern date, by Mr. Cornish, of Colyton.*

* The materials for this account were chiefly furnished by one to whose efforts on behalf of the congregation I would fain pay a more than common tribute of gratitude—I allude to my father, Mr. William Murch, who, with my grandfather, Mr. Jerom Murch, was a member of the committee for rebuilding the house.

Ministers.

Jerom Maynard	1721—1762.
—— Sprague	—1753.
—— Wheeler	1753—1757.
Francis Webb	1757—1758.
Philip Adams	1758—1780.
Stephen Freeman	1787—1790.
John Hughes	1793—1831.
James Taplin	1831.

Mr. Jerom Maynard was born at Corfe Castle, Dorsetshire, in 1677. His father served in the army of Oliver Cromwell during the civil war, and was taken prisoner by the Royalists. This circumstance is noticed in the pulpit Bible in the Bridge Meeting, which originally belonged to the brave republican. The subject of this memoir was apprenticed, while his father was in prison, to a serge-maker, at Moreton-Hampstead. During his apprenticeship he became a member of a General Baptist congregation, and occasionally engaged in a religious conference. His first settlement was at Axminster, where he carried on his business, and whence he went every Sunday to preach to a small congregation at Dalwood, a village a few miles distant. It is impossible to avoid admiring the piety, benevolence, and perseverance, which he manifested after his removal to Honiton, in collecting a people with whom he could worship "in spirit and in truth." He continued to preach occasionally until within a short time of his death, which took place in 1762, in the eighty-fifth year of his age.

Mr. Philip Adams was also what is commonly termed a lay preacher. He had a farm in the neighbourhood of Taunton, on which he resided. But his mind, far from being wholly

devoted to the earth, was well stored with knowledge, and his chief desire was to do good. He is said to have been remarkable for a plain, apostolic appearance, and a refined, impressive style of preaching. The greater part of his time and attention, as a minister, was devoted to a society of Baptists at Wedmore, in Somersetshire, with which he was connected some years. His visits to Honiton were monthly; he preached to Mr. Maynard's people one part of the day, and to the old Presbyterian congregation the other. It is not known how long these engagements lasted, or what was the cause of their being discontinued. The Rev. Dr. Toulmin, of Taunton, who took a warm interest in the welfare of the Honiton congregation, was for several years one of Mr. Adams's most intimate friends. Their minds were formed in the same mould; their hearts were fixed on the same objects. Mr. Adams was interred in the burial-ground belonging to the Baptist chapel, Mary Street, Taunton. Dr. Toulmin conducted the funeral service, and several members of the Honiton congregation attended to testify their gratitude for the pious labours and amiable example of their minister.

The Rev. FRANCIS WEBB.—The ancestors and immediate connexions of this gentleman were highly respectable. His father lived at Taunton, where he himself was born in 1735. Two of his cousins, Robert and Nathaniel Webb, were successively Members of Parliament for that borough. One of his paternal uncles was collector of the customs at Montserrat, and the other, Attorney-General of Antigua. His eldest brother lived at the Island of St. Christopher, was one of the assistant Judges, and a member of the Assembly at Montserrat.

Francis Webb received his classical education at Abingdon and Bristol. He afterwards became a pupil, first of Dr. Doddridge, then of Dr. Ashworth, at Daventry, and lastly of Dr. Amory, at Taunton. His first settlement as a Dissenting minister was at Honiton, where he was highly esteemed. After a short time he was induced to become the pastor of the General

Baptist church meeting in Paul's Alley, London, where he was ordained in 1758.* In these situations he remained about ten years. He then relinquished the ministerial office, and undertook a civil employment at Gravesend. The reasons which led him to take this step are not fully known, but they did not consist in dislike to the duties of the ministry, or in any incapacity for it. His published sermons afford ample proof that his preaching was eminently sound, polished, impressive, and animating; they testify that he had superior intellectual powers, and a deep sense of the value of religion.

In 1777 Mr. Webb removed from Gravesend into Dorsetshire. Here, at the house of a friend, he met the Duke of Leeds, then Secretary of State, who immediately sought his society. This amiable nobleman frequently availed himself of Mr. Webb's assistance, and their intimacy continued until the death of his Grace. In 1786 he went to Hesse Cassel, with Sir Isaac Heard, who was deputed to convey the ensign of the Order of the Garter to the Landgrave of Hesse. The Latin oration delivered at the investiture was the production of Mr. Webb's pen. Fifteen years afterwards we find him going to Paris, in the office of secretary to Mr. Jackson, who had been appointed the resident minister at that capital, during the negociation of the treaty of peace at Amiens. In consequence of bad health, Mr. Webb's stay did not exceed two months; but he remained long enough to have frequent intercourse with many persons connected with the French government, and to be highly regarded for his frank disposition and great abilities.

During the last thirty years of his life he lived in various places. His abode was, successively, in the neighbourhood of Crewkerne; at Brasted, in Kent; Lower Lytchett, near Poole; Norton-sub-Hampden, near South Petherton; Lufton, near Yeovil; and Barrington, near Ilminster. Amidst all these changes, some of which arose from necessity rather than choice, Mr. Webb devoted much of his attention to elegant and im-

* Wilson's History, iii. 259.

proving literary pursuits.* "In politics he was a decided Whig; in religion an Unitarian Dissenter. On all subjects of human inquiry, but particularly on the most important, he was accustomed to think freely. He was a man of delicate moral taste and strong feelings, which led him to perceive clearly and to expose forcibly the deformity and baseness of vice, in whomsoever found. A mean, cringing, time-serving disposition his soul utterly abhorred; while he could not refrain from expressing in terms of rapture his approbation of noble, generous, and disinterested actions."

Mr. Webb was strongly attached to Lufton,—a delightful retreat in unison with his refined taste and ardent love of nature. But his dwelling was the parsonage-house; and on being obliged to quit it, he removed to Barrington, which proved the last stage in his mortal journey. He died August 2nd, 1815, in the eightieth year of his age, leaving a widow, the daughter of William Milner, of Poole, Esq., who published the last edition of his sermons. He was interred in the parish church of Barrington, near a plain, marble tablet, thus inscribed by his own desire:

FRANCIS WEBB,
THE FRIEND OF MANKIND,
AND A FRIEND TO THEIR SACRED RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES,
BOTH CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS:
BORN AT TAUNTON, 18th SEPTEMBER, 1735;
DIED AT BARRINGTON, 2nd AUGUST, 1815.

* See memoir prefixed to the last edition of Mr. Webb's sermons. The following list of his works is there given. 1. "Sermons"—4 vols. 12mo., (now republished in 1 vol. 8vo.) 1766. 2. "Marmor Norfolciense:" a Satire, written when Dr. Johnson accepted a pension and became a government writer. 3. "Letter to John Sawbridge, Esq., on Popular Opposition to Government." 4. "Thoughts on the Constitutional Right and Power of the Crown in the bestowal of Places and Pensions;" 8vo. 1772. 5. "An Epistle to Lord George Germaine." 6. "Friendship," a Poem: "Justice," a Poem. 7. "An Epistle to the Rev. Mr. Kell," and an "Ode to Fortitude." 8. "Poems on Wisdom, on the Deity, and on Genius." 9. "The Diary"—"A Series of Letters on the dispute with Spain respecting Nootka Sound." 10. A "Hymn to the Dryads." 11. An "Ode to

The Rev. JOHN HUGHES was descended from one of the oldest families in the Principality. He was the eldest son of the venerable David Hughes, of Wincanton, who, at his ordination, in 1760, steadily refused to subscribe articles which he could not understand. His remote ancestors were also noted for their unflinching adherence to the principles of civil and religious liberty, for their severe sufferings and noble sacrifices.* Nor was he unworthy his descent. Although anxious to live "peaceably with all men," he never sacrificed his mental independence; and through the whole of his life he encouraged others to exercise the "liberty wherewith Christ had made them free."

At the proper age he became a student at the Hoxton Academy. His first settlement was at Tewkesbury, where he enjoyed the society and friendship of the widow and family of Dr. Doddridge. Wishing to be near his brother, the Rev. W. Hughes, then [illegible] of the Isle of Wight, he accepted an invitation from Honiton. Here he spent thirty-eight years, "happy in his connexion with a people after his own heart, of inquiring minds and catholic spirit." And yet he was by no means a stranger to grief. He witnessed many misfortunes, which he did all in his power to alleviate. About fourteen years before his death he lost his excellent wife, a niece of Dr. Harris, the minister at Luppit. And at a much more recent period, when his frame had been weakened by disease, he received a severe shock in the death of his most valued friend and hearer Mr. Isaac Cox,—a man whose memory is venerated as that of one of the brightest ornaments of human nature. But in reference to both events he could say, what he *did* in reference to the first, "Many a time has it been mine to exhort

the Rural Nymphs;" 4to. 12. "Somerset, a Poem;" 4to. 1811. 13. "A Memoir of Giles Hussey, the Artist, communicated to the editor of the History of Dorsetshire." 14. "Panharmonicon;" an attempt to prove that the principles of Harmony more or less prevail throughout Nature. 4to. 1814.

* Mon. Repos., N. S., Vol. v. p. 718; Obituary of Mr. Hughes.

others to bow to their heavenly Father's behests; shall *I* not also bow and evince that I believe what I teach? The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord"!

Mr. Hughes, as a preacher, was not popular; yet those who knew and valued him could profit by his services. It was by his example that he taught most effectually; his patience under severe suffering, his ready, unostentatious charity, and his truly devotional spirit, made a deep impression. He died July 19th, 1831. His little flock followed him to the grave, thankful for the light he had been permitted to shed on their path, and hoping to meet him "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality!"



COLYTON.

"THE town itself of Collington is no very notable thing."—LELAND.

"A market town of the hundred of that name in Devonshire, one hundred and fifty-one miles from London, and situated on the river Coll, at its junction with the Axe. The trade formerly carried on in serges is nearly lost."—ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA.

"Though a small town, it is most delightfully situated within three miles of the British Channel, fine views of which present themselves at very short distances, as also the devious courses of two beautiful rivers, the little Coly and the larger Ax, through rich meadows and between rising hills, shaded with trees which present innumerable objects to charm the eye and elevate the heart."—CORNISH.

Population in 1811,—1774; in 1821,—1945; in 1831,—2182.

OLD MEETING-HOUSE.

The town of Colyton was favoured with pastors, who were friendly to religious freedom, many years before the passing of the Act of Uniformity. About the year 1640 the celebrated Dr. Manton, afterwards one of the chaplains to Oliver Cromwell, entered upon his ministerial labours in this parish.* In 1654, Mr. John Wilkins was presented to the living; he continued to be the incumbent till Bartholomew Day, 1662. For some time after his ejectment, he preached in his own house; but subsequently died of a consumption, leaving his flock to be served by his fellow-sufferers in the district.† Of these, the nearest to Colyton, were Mr. Gill, of Shute; Mr. Ashwood, of Axminster; Mr. Tarrant,

* Life of Manton, P. D. M. Vol. iii. p. 241.

† Mr. Wilkins died in 1667. He was a man of eminent piety, remarkably affectionate, and an excellent preacher. He was interred in the Vicar's vestry, in the large and handsome parish church at Colyton. Part of the inscription cannot be deciphered, but the date is visible, as are a few other particulars, and the following lines:—

"Such Pillars layed aside,
How can the Church abide?
He left his Pulpit-hee
In Patmos God to see.
This shining light can have
No place to preach but's grave."

of Musbury; Mr. Short and Mr. Kerridge, of Lyme; Mr. Godwine, of Uplyme; and Mr. Soreton, of Honiton.

The first Nonconformists at Colyton met with great hardships. They commenced by assembling in each other's houses, but were at length obliged to conduct their devotions in an adjoining wood. Their first place of public worship in the town was opened soon after the Revolution; it was a dwelling-house, and though mean and inconvenient was well attended. There is reason to suppose that Mr. Gill, the ejected minister at Shute,—a parish connected with Colyton, privately served the congregation from the death of Mr. Wilkins, in 1667, till his own, in 1688. About the latter period, they engaged Mr. Kerridge, who had been a schoolmaster at Lyme, and was ejected from that office for his Nonconformity; he was a sufferer in various ways; at the time of the Rye-House Plot the county troop, in consequence of some groundless suspicions, were ordered to proceed to Lyme and seize both himself and his excellent colleague,—Mr. Short.

Between the Dissenters of Lyme and Colyton there was frequent communication. One of Mr. Short's sons assisted Mr. Kerridge in his ministerial duties at Colyton, and educated young men for the ministry. There was also an interchange of political feeling among the inhabitants of these neighbouring towns, which brought them into still greater trouble. Mr. Short, Sen., was so deeply implicated in Monmouth's rebellion, that he was

sent from Lyme to be cast into a dungeon at Portsmouth. And several of the people at Colyton, animated by the general desire to free themselves from the tyranny of a popish king, no sooner heard that the duke was landed than they flocked to his standard. For this offence four of them suffered death; they were executed as traitors near the market place, and died with great piety, resolution, and constancy. One of them being asked if it did not grieve him to think how his body would be mangled and his quarters exposed in the highways, answered with the calm consciousness that he had done his duty,—"It matters little, the resurrection will restore all with advantage."*

Mr. Kerridge died in 1705, and was succeeded by Mr. Rosewell. This minister was ordained in 1690, and was probably connected with some congregation before he came to Colyton. At the time of his election the society was numerous, and for many years there was an additional minister at Colyton, who occasionally visited the infant churches in the neighbourhood. But soon after Mr. Rosewell commenced his ministry here, he had no regular assistant; the congregation urged him to have one; he refused, and there was a division; to those members of the congregation who adhered to him he preached in another house. On Mr. Rosewell's death some of his hearers became Baptists, but this society was soon dissolved. Meanwhile the original congregation had the services of Mr. Samuel Short,

* English Presbyterian.

as pastor, and Mr. Matthew Towgood, as assistant. Mr. Short probably came to Colyton in 1707, and removed in 1714; Mr. Towgood kept an academy here, and left for Shepton Mallet, in 1716.

The minister who succeeded Mr. Short in the pastoral office was Mr. William Youatt. He was ordained in 1715, and was then at Colyton with two hundred hearers. For many years, he had as his colleague Mr. Robert Batten, who, in conjunction with Mr. Youatt, often preached at Sidmouth. In 1737, Mr. Batten left for Ottery St. Mary; and the senior minister took the whole charge of the society, which he retained till he was disabled by the palsy. Then came Mr. Samuel Slater. He was an Arian, if not an Unitarian: of the opinions of his predecessors, we have no information. The congregation included a few opulent persons, but consisted chiefly of tradesmen and farmers. During the first half of the last century, the salary of the pastor did not exceed £30. per annum; this, however, was then deemed a good sum even for the support of a family.

It was soon after Mr. Slater was chosen that the present meeting-house was built. The expense of the erection was defrayed almost entirely by the society. Dr. Toulmin succeeded Mr. Slater, like whom, he was much beloved; his preaching was plain, yet striking, and the congregation increased. When he had been at Colyton four years, he saw reason to change his sentiments respecting Baptism,

which occasioned his removal to Taunton. The society then chose Mr. Anstis who, however, soon removed to Bridport, being desired by the corporation of that town to undertake a school there. In 1772, the congregation having been destitute four years, Mr. Cornish accepted their invitation, and continued here fifty years. His sermons were sound, he was beloved by his friends and highly respected as a writer, a classical scholar and an instructor of youth. Living in a house adjoining the chapel, he used the gallery as a school-room, and there educated many members of influential families both in the Church of England and among Dissenters. Yet his ministry was not popular; so great had been the diminution of his flock, in 1814, that a proposal was made to him by four "orthodox" ministers in the district, to give up his chapel to a Calvinistic minister. To this proposal Mr. Cornish gave a decided negative, adding that "in early life he was impressed with a remark in a charge of good Mr. Lavington's,"—'Should the number of your hearers lessen, do not be discouraged so as to grow remiss in your endeavours; remember, Jesus Christ preached an excellent sermon to one woman.'"

The following extract from Mr. Cornish's sketch of his own life* illustrates the customs and resources of country congregations at the close of the last century.

* Mon. Rep., Vol. xviii. p. 619.

"J. Cornish boarded eleven years in the family of Mr. Slade, a steady friend to the Dissenting cause, whose house was for years the chief resort of various ministers visiting the town. J. Cornish's income fell rather short of £40. per annum, though besides some endowments, his hearers subscribed as much as he desired. For a few years it somewhat exceeded £50., but fell back to £40. again. No minister, unless possessing other means of support, could now subsist on such a salary with tolerable decency: but before the American and other expensive wars Britain has since engaged in, a good manager would make it suffice. Goldsmith uses a poetical license when he describes a pastor as 'passing rich with forty pounds a year,' and contriving to display generous hospitality. A single man, however, with that income could, even so lately as 1772, make a decent appearance and be able to spare something for charitable purposes. There was hardly any Dissenting congregation without some one or more families ready to board a minister, not desiring to gain, aiming only at a fair recompence. Many ministers, at that time, in the West of England, were boarded by respectable persons for less than £20. per annum; and in good farm houses, a much smaller sum was accepted for being found every thing like other members of the family. A gratis horse was frequently at the service of ministers, and both horse and rider kindly received, on making exchanges and visits, by some hospitable hearers."

Since the death of Mr. Cornish, the congregation have often been without a pastor. During such intervals, the services were frequently conducted by serious and intelligent members of the flock. They are at present supplied by Mr. Taplin, of Honiton, who preaches in that town every Lord's Day morning and evening, and regularly visits Colyton in the afternoon. His hearers are not numerous, but there is reason to believe that his

labours to keep alive that love of religious truth and that desire for Christian excellence for which this ancient church has been so long noted—will not be in vain.

The following inscription has been copied from a neat marble tablet in the meeting-house:—

M. S.
OF THE
REV. JOSEPH CORNISH,
BORN AT TAUNTON,
DEC. 16th, 1750;
FIXED IN THE MINISTRY AT COLYTON,
JULY, 1772;
DIED OCTOBER 9th, 1823;
"HUMBLY LOOKING FOR THE SALVATION OF GOD
THROUGH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."

Ministers.

JOHN WILKINS	1662—1667.
JOHN GILL.	1667—1688.
JOHN KERRIDGE, M.A.*	1689—1705.
JOHN ROSEWELL.....	1705—1707.
SAMUEL SHORT	1707—1714.
WILLIAM YOUATT	1715—1745.
SAMUEL SLATER	1745—1761.
JOSHUA TOULMIN, LL.D.	1761—1765.
MATTHEW ANSTIS	1766—1768.
JOSEPH CORNISH.....	1772—1823.
GEORGE SKEY	1824—1826.
G. F. MATTHEW	1826—1829.
JOHN SMITH	1830—1832.
JAMES TAPLIN	1834.

* I omit the names of the assistants in consequence of the uncertainty connected with the requisite particulars.

MATTHEW ANSTIS was born at St. Germains, in the year 1740. His situation prevented him from having the benefit of a classical education at the usual early period. When he was about seventeen, he entered upon a course of study with the Rev. T. Morgan, of Liskeard, preparatory to his going to Carmarthen, about the year 1761. Before he went to Colyton, he preached a short time in the meeting-house at Falmouth; but as his religious sentiments, which he took no pains to conceal, differed from those of the majority of the congregation, he soon removed. Neither did he remain long at Colyton; in addition to his invitation to become the master of a school at Bridport, he received and accepted another from a small congregation in the neighbourhood. The latter office he relinquished in the course of a few years, and devoted his attention entirely to the education of youth. In this capacity he gained the gratitude of many who were always ready to bear witness to his ability and faithfulness. He officiated occasionally as a minister after he gave up the stated charge of a flock; and we find him supplying at Colyton for three months, in 1781, during the absence of Mr. Cornish. The interest he continued to cherish in theological questions, and in the progress of Christian truth and righteousness, is well known to the readers of the Old Series of the Monthly Repository, to which he contributed numerous papers.* In early life, Mr. Anstis adopted the Humanitarian system; and he *avowed* his adoption of it at a time when the great majority of the worshipers of one God in one Person, in the West of England, still held Arian opinions concerning the person of Christ. The fruits of his faith were visible, more particularly, in his lively anxiety for the welfare of the human race, in his liberal, and sometimes profuse, pecuniary contributions to works of charity, and in the earnestness with which he cultivated the conviction, amidst mental infirmities, bodily sufferings, and the prospect of death, "*that all things are from God and for good to all.*"

* For references to these and a sketch of the life of Mr. Anstis, see Mon. Repos., Vol. xviii. p. 731.

MR. CORNISH.—Few Dissenting ministers who have lived in retired situations are had in more respectful remembrance than Mr. Cornish. The number of years he remained with his flock, the literary efforts he made on behalf of religious liberty, and his learning, benevolence, and piety, gained him general esteem.*

He was born at Taunton in 1750. In very early life he discovered an inclination to the ministry. The former part of his education was conducted successively by Mr. Patch, a clergyman, Mr. Glass, from Westminster school, and Dr. Toulmin. In 1767, he went to Hoxton and spent five years under the guidance of Dr. Savage, Dr. Kippis, and Dr. Rees. The venerable Mr. Holden, of Tenterden, was his class-fellow and passed his examination at the same time with him. It is remarkable that these gentlemen not only corresponded with the most cordial friendship, but remained in the same situations during the remainder of their lives.

While Mr. Cornish was at Hoxton, he occasionally supplied at Epsom, from which place, as well as from Colyton, he rereceived a unanimous invitation. He preferred Colyton in consequence of its nearness to his aged father, and the earnest recommendations of his friends Doctors Amory and Toulmin. In May 1773, he was ordained at the General Baptist meeting-house at Taunton, in conjunction with Mr. Finnemore, of Collumpton, and Mr. Baynham, of Totness. Dr. Toulmin, the minister of the chapel, preached; Mr. Kiddel delivered the charge; and the devotional services were conducted by Mr. Gifford and Mr. Jillard. After residing eleven years in the house of Mr. Slade, Mr. Cornish removed to another dwelling, for the purpose of taking pupils, and continued his school, with considerable reputation and usefulness, till he had entered his seventieth year.

Mr. Cornish's talents and character procured invitations from several larger societies. He was proposed as the successor of

* M. R. Vol. xviii. p. 617.

Mr. Farmer at Salters' Hall, and strongly urged to settle, in 1781, at Tewkesbury, and in 1792, at Banbury. But the attachment of his friends at Colyton led him to spend the remainder of his days among them; and his school increased his income so as to enable him to live comfortably and devote a considerable sum to the poor. Mr. Holden mentions an interesting circumstance* in reference to his *savings*. "From the fluctuations in trade during the American War, his father was a sufferer in his pecuniary affairs; and at length called his creditors together and honestly divided his remaining property among them. Many years after this, when my beloved friend, by the profits of his school, had it in his power to do it, he called the creditors together, and paid them up to twenty shillings in the pound."

Mr. Cornish published the following works:—1. A Serious and Earnest Address to Protestant Dissenters, a 4*d.* tract, which appeared before he left the academy, and of which three editions were rapidly sold. 2. A Brief and Impartial History of the Puritans, also price 4*d.*, which met like its predecessor with a very favourable reception. 3. In 1775, A Blow at the Root of all Priestly Claims,—a pamphlet for the copyright of which Mr. Johnson, of St. Paul's Churchyard, gave the author five guineas, a large sum at that time to Mr. Cornish. 4. In 1777, A Letter to Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle, on the Inconsistency of that Prelate's Conformity to the Church, with his avowed wish for extensive alterations in the Liturgy and Articles. 5. In 1780, A Life of that excellent citizen Mr. T. Firmin; designed to soften the prejudices of zealous Trinitarians and excite Christians of every persuasion to activity in doing good. 6. In 1783, An Attempt to Display the Importance of Classical Learning; addressed to the parents and guardians of youth. 7. In 1797, A Brief History of Nonconformity. In addition to the above, Mr. Cornish published a Thanksgiving Sermon; A Treatise on Divine Manifestations; A Pamphlet on the Preexistence of Christ, and another Treatise on Evangelical Holiness. All these had a rapid sale, and are now out of print.

* M. R., Vol. xviii. p. 635.

The author advocated his views of truth with so much candour and charity, yet with so much firmness and uprightness, that he both won admiration and produced conviction. One year we see him defending Christianity with no common ability, and the next writing consolotary letters and sending pecuniary relief to a stranger in London, who had been imprisoned for selling Deistical publications.—And the measure he meted to others was measured to him again. While advocating the cause of Dissent at all hazards, writing against unworthy compromises, and even striking "a blow at the root of all priestly claims," he was employed to educate the sons of men who in religion and politics were strictly opposed to him. So highly was he respected by men of all parties, that his death was universally lamented, and he was followed to the grave by the curate of the parish and a large body of parishioners. Nor can those who knew Mr. Cornish forget that while he obtained the respect of his neighbours by his learning and charity, he walked with God habitually in private life, and reached the confines of the tomb with that peace of mind which passeth all understanding.

SIDMOUTH.

SIDMOUTH is a small but neat town, situated at the mouth of a narrow valley, opening to the sea, between two steep ranges of hills. Through this valley the little river Sid flows towards the ocean, till it is lost in the pebbles on the beach. The cliffs are composed of sand, tinged by the red oxide of iron, and partly calcareous; the glare of which, together with that of a broad bed of pebbles, and the low situation of Sidmouth, render the town intensely hot at the time of a clear summer sky; the adjacent scenery is, however, extremely delightful. This was formerly a good sea-port; but the harbour has been so choked up with sand and pebbles, that pleasure-boats and fishing-smacks are the only vessels that can now approach the shore. Of late years, the population and buildings have increased, through the number of persons who frequent the town in the summer season for the purposes of bathing and recreation.—BRITTON and BRAYLEY.

Population in 1811,—1688; in 1821,—2747; in 1831,—3126.

OLD MEETING.

This building stands near the entrance to the town from Honiton. The end of it is in a line with the street; yet the traveller sees no signs of a place of worship. It is connected with a dwelling-house on one side by a low wall, in which is a door opening from the street into a small yard, partially used as a burial-ground. From this yard the meeting-house is entered; and the interior, though neatly fitted up, confirms the impression which is derived from the outside, that its founders designed (as is well known to have been the case in other towns) that, if it ceased to be needed as a chapel, it should be converted into a dwelling-house.

A hundred and twenty-five years have now elapsed since this humble edifice was built. Prior to that period—the year 1710, a Presbyterian society existed in the town of Sidmouth. No minister was ejected here; but the spirit of Nonconformity, finding its way from Sidbury and other places adjacent, a congregation was formed in the time of Charles the Second. There is no account of a regular minister till 1715, when the learned and excellent Dr. Bennet Stevenson, afterwards pastor of the Presbyterian congregation at Bath, was settled at Sid-

mouth, and had two hundred and fifty hearers. He was probably here at the time the meeting-house was built.

The next minister was Mr. Palk, who began his ministry about the beginning of the century. He came here in 1719, and in the same year preached a sermon (afterwards published) before the Assembly at Exeter, on the Divinity of Christ. In 1731, Mr. Palk went to Southmolton, and the congregation chose Mr. West, of whom some account has been given in connexion with Ilminster, to which place he removed in 1738. The people were then supplied two or three years by Mr. John Brown. In 1740, the office of pastor was filled by Mr. Lacy, who died in the following year. He was followed by Mr. Berry, who, after officiating here eight years, succeeded Mr. Towgood at Crediton. Mr. Kiddel, the minister from 1750 to 1759, was a native of Tiverton, educated under Mr. Moore at Bridgwater, went from Sidmouth to Cork, and afterwards settled at Shepton Mallet.

Mr. Kiddel was ordained at Sidmouth in 1750. Among the ministers who officiated were Mr. Moore, Mr. Towgood, and Mr. Amory. The tone of the services (to which there is an interesting allusion in a letter written at the time and preserved by Dr. Toulmin*) indicates the feelings of the Dissenters in the West with regard to several important questions. Mr. Towgood's remarks on the subject of

* See Mr. Hoare's Letter to the Rev. S. Slater, of Colyton, Mon. Repos., O. S., Vol. vii. p. 282.

ordination were manly and consistent; he asserted that the right of ordaining was vested in each society, and disclaimed all pretence of conferring any latent gift or qualification. But when Mr. Kiddel came to give his answers on the controverted points of Christianity, he used language in reference to the Son and the Holy Spirit, which indicated a desire to accommodate his preaching to the notions of the multitude. "As to the Holy Spirit (says the sensible and straight-forward Mr. Hoare, in his remarks on the service), as neither a throne, nor kingdom, nor church, nor people, are any where assigned him in Scripture; nor, to the best of my remembrance, a single petition either immediately or by consequence addressed to him, I can't conceive how the same with a very little variation may be declared of him as of the other two persons. Much less can I conceive how an Unitarian could with the least propriety sum up his confession of faith with that glaring interpolation of 1 John v. 7, which the most eminent confessor of the present century* of which the three kingdoms can boast, now with God, has beyond all peradventure proved to be spurious, both in his tracts against Martyn and also in his address to the Convocation. It was the subject of an affectionate prophet's lamentation, which I wish there was not too much reason to resume in our days,—'that his brethren and countrymen were not valiant for the truth'; and as truth is the most valuable thing in the world, so I think all, but especially

* Mr. Emlyn, of Dublin.

ministers, ought tenaciously to adhere thereto, though it should have the misfortune to lie under the most discouraging circumstances."

Mr. Kiddel was succeeded by Mr. Hogg, afterwards the minister at the Mint Meeting, Exeter, and ultimately a banker in the same city. He published a sermon "On the Taking of Quebec and other Successes against the French." We have also the names of Mr. Chapman, Mr. Isaac Smith, and Mr. William Hughes. Mr. Smith quitted England for America in 1784. Mr. Hughes removed to Leather Lane, Holborn; he has now lived many years in the Isle of Wight, without a pastoral charge. The vacancy filled by him in London was occasioned by the removal of Mr. Butcher to Sidbury Vale for the recovery of his health. This gentleman having derived much benefit from the change of air, was, in 1798, chosen pastor of the Sidmouth flock. The congregation did not become numerous under his care; he was not what is called a popular preacher; but it maintained a highly respectable character. Among his auditors were several who came to Sidmouth as visiters, and who were thankful to find a place where they could worship in spirit and in truth, and listen to discourses which, for piety, simplicity, and general utility, were rarely equalled. One gentleman there was, originally of the Jewish persuasion, who became a permanent resident at Sidmouth, and who was so much pleased with Mr. Butcher's society as well as ministerial services, that he presented him with a

valuable piece of ground, near his own mansion, on which Mr. Butcher built a house. In his time the congregation became decidedly Unitarian, according to the common acceptation of the term; Arian sentiments had been professed by many of his predecessors, and the people, unfettered by trust-deeds, anxious only to believe what the Scriptures taught, gradually arrived at what they now deem Christian Truth.

In 1820, Mr. Butcher was succeeded by Mr. Yeates, who remained here about five years. The congregation were then supplied by Mr. Maurice, formerly the minister of the Presbyterian society at Frenchay. This gentleman came to Sidmouth to obtain the benefit of the Devonshire air for some invalids in his family; and on his removal, the people, as a token of gratitude for his zealous and disinterested services, presented him with a silver waiter. The next pastor was Mr. Heineken, from the College at York, who removed to Collumpton in 1830. He was followed at Sidmouth by Mr. James, by whose ministry, though it only continued about two years, the congregation was much improved. During this period, great interest was excited in the town by the delivery of a course of lectures, in which Mr. James declared what appeared to him the whole counsel of God. These lectures were frequently attended by four hundred persons; a permanent addition, by no means inconsiderable, was made to the society; and its future welfare was wisely provided for by corresponding pastoral efforts.

and by the establishment of a small library and a Sunday-school. In 1832, Mr. James accepted an invitation to Bridgwater, and was succeeded by Mr. Baker, who had lately completed his course of education at York. At the beginning of 1835, Mr. Baker quitted Sidmouth and, it is understood, the ministry. The congregation are now supplied by Mr. Gibson, who has recently seceded from the Established Church, in consequence of a change in his sentiments.

In the chapel, on a large board, is the following announcement:

BENEFACTIONS TO THIS CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

MRS. JUDITH GUNDRY	£100.
F. FOLAQUIER, ESQ.	50.
ABRAHAM FOLLETT, GENT.	50.
JOHN CARSLAKE, ESQ.	100.
MRS. LEIGH	100.

There are two tablets; one is to the memory of John Carslake, of Cotmaton, Esq., who died in 1815, and of his sister, Elizabeth Carslake; the other has the following inscription:

"MARK THE PERFECT MAN, AND BEHOLD THE UPRIGHT, FOR THE END OF THAT MAN IS PEACE."—PSALM XXXVII. 37.

TO THE MEMORY OF THE REV. EDMUND BUTCHER,
WHO DIED AT BATH, APRIL 14th, 1822, AGED 65 YEARS.
HIS CONGREGATION
ERECT THIS TABLET AS A LASTING TRIBUTE
OF RESPECT AND ADMIRATION
FOR THE PIETY, ZEAL, AND UNREMITTING FIDELITY
WITH WHICH HE FULFILLED HIS PASTORAL DUTIES IN THIS PLACE
DURING 23 YEARS.

Ministers.

Bennet Stevenson, D.D.	—1719.
William Palk	1719—1731.
William West	1731—1738.
John Brown	1738—1740.
John Lacy	1740—1741.
John Berry	1742—1750.
Benjamin Kiddel	1750—1759.
John Hogg	1759—1771.
William Chapman	1772—1778.
Isaac Smith	1778—1784.
William Hughes	1784—1797.
Edmund Butcher	1798—1820.
Matthew Lee Yeates	1820—1825.
Nicholas Samuel Heineken	1825—1830.
William James	1830—1832.
Thomas Baker	1832—1835.

The Rev. Edmund Butcher was born at Colchester, in 1757. His family was originally of Feering, in Essex, a place of which, about the year 1667, his ancestor John Butcher was rector. The father of Edmund was a carpenter and builder, and unable to afford him many advantages. Dr. Stanton, a Dissenting minister at Colchester, supplied him with preparatory instruction, and his progress shewed that it was not ill bestowed. When only fourteen years of age, he wrote a little poem of several books, entitled "The Brutæis," in heroic verse, on the fabled report of the peopling of Britain by the Trojans. This composition, ornamented with drawings of pen and ink, was found among his papers, and is preserved as a proof of his good taste and persevering industry. He soon afterwards went to London and was apprenticed to a linen-draper. During his

leisure hours, he cultivated his taste for literature, and employed his pen for periodical works. Whatever profits accrued were transmitted to his father, mother, and only sister, who composed the whole of the family. On the Lord's day he attended Salters' Hall, and became acquainted with Mr. Worthington, who, discerning, his talents, led his views to the ministry. Furnished by Mr. W., with preparatory instruction, he went to Daventry Academy, then conducted by Mr. Belsham.

His first settlement was at Sowerby, in Yorkshire. After some time he removed to London, and preached occasionally at Monkwell Street and Carter Lane. But his stated post was at Leather Lane, where he was ordained in 1789, by Messrs. Tayler, Kippis, Belsham, Gillibrand, Worthington, Lindsey, and Jacomb. He now united with a few ministers in carrying on a Wednesday evening lecture in Salters' Hall, which was well attended for several winters. He bestowed much attention on a Family Bible, in conjunction with Mr. Worthington,—a work on an original plan, and of great utility; and he edited the latter volumes of the Protestant Dissenters' Magazine. At Leather Lane he continued many years, and revived the congregation. Popularity he could not attain, in consequence of the weakness of his voice; but his sterling sense and piety always ensured him a respectable audience. His health becoming precarious, he was obliged to leave London for Sidbury Vale, near Sidmouth. Here his complaint, an affection of the lungs, yielded to the mildness of the air, and his general constitution was invigorated.

In 1798, Mr. Butcher was chosen pastor at Sidmouth. The flock was small, but he entered on his duties with cheerfulness and persevered in them with Christian fidelity. He and his family formed around them a small band of friends who knew their worth and studied their happiness. Within the last few years of his life he was afflicted with a kind of paralytic stroke, which produced great debility. In November, 1821, he removed to Bath, with the hope of gaining some relief; but, soon after, he fell down and dislocated his hip. This confining

him to his bed, increased his debility, which terminated in his placid dissolution, on April 14, 1822. It is remarkable that he had long wished it might be the will of God to take him (when he had fulfilled all the designs of His providence) *on the day of rest.* His remains were interred, early in the morning, at Lyncombe, in the cemetery belonging to the Bath Unitarian chapel; the service was conducted with an impressive solemnity by the Rev. J. Hunter.

Besides the works already mentioned, and his "Picture of Sidmouth," and his "Tour through various parts of England," Mr. Butcher published three volumes of sermons for the use of families. The third volume has an interesting account of his adoption of Humanitarianism. His last publication was a volume of "Prayers for the use of Families and Individuals," adapted for each discourse in his volume of sermons, and "Forms suited to particular occasions." After his death, Mrs. Butcher published a small volume of his "Discourses on our Lord's Sermon on the Mount." He wrote many valuable hymns which have found their way into various collections. These were warmly admired by no less a judge than Mrs. Barbauld. Of the hymn on the meeting of good men of all parties in heaven, that lady was once heard to express the highest praise.

Mr. Butcher's prominent characteristics were good sense, great modesty, and true liberality. The pleasures which he relished most keenly were the pleasures of home: some years before his death, he sent the following lines to a periodical publication.

"Ask me to choose my happiest lot,
I choose exactly what I've got!
Ask me what I wish for more,—
A little to relieve the poor:
A life well spent, since life is given,
And long or short as pleases Heaven!"*

* Monthly Repos., Vol. xviii. p. 312

LYMPSTONE AND GULLIFORD.

Lympstone is a pleasant village eight miles from Exeter and three from Exmouth. The neighbourhood is celebrated for the salubrity of its air and the beauty of its scenery.

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"Ask me to choose my happiest lot,
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Ask me what I wish for more,—
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A life well spent, since life is given,
And long or short as pleases [illegible]

* [illegible]

LYMPSTONE AND GULLIFORD MEETINGS.

THERE is probably no other instance of the existence of two Presbyterian places of worship so near each other in a retired situation. The more ancient is about a mile from Lympstone, and is called Gulliford, from an estate of that name on which it stands. This, however, is not the original Nonconformist place of worship, having been built little more than sixty years. The society was formed soon after the passing of the Act of Uniformity, and consisted of the friends of Mr. Samuel Fones, who was ejected from Woodbury, the parish to which Gulliford belongs.

Mr. Fones left the country soon after his ejectment. In 1687, his people were sufficiently numerous to invite as their pastor, Mr. Samuel Tapper, another sufferer for conscience' sake. Two years afterwards, a field was obtained for "erecting thereon a meeting for religious worship and the service of God of the people commonly called Presbyterians." Such is the language of the original deed, dated April 10, 1689. Mr. Tapper's "warm practical preaching and holy exemplary conversation gained him universal love among his people.

His congregation increased, and he was blessed with success in the conversion of many souls. He was also generally respected by the neighbouring gentry who had any moderation and knew how to value learning, an obliging temper, and genteel carriage."* But his good qualities did not secure him from the fury of high church bigots, who, during the times of persecution, violently entered his meeting-house and broke the windows. On the next Lord's day, he prayed earnestly for his enemies, that God would forgive their sin and turn their hearts.

In 1708, Mr. Tapper, feeling the infirmities of age, resigned his charge to Mr. Joseph Manston, who had been his assistant and was ordained at Lympstone, in 1703. In 1715, Mr. Manston's congregation consisted of five hundred persons. He acted with the orthodox in the proceedings of the Exeter assembly, and published a sermon "On the Perils of False Brethren." The congregation continued to increase so considerably, that eight years afterwards, as it appears by another deed, they obtained an additional part of the field for enlarging the meeting-house and the burial-ground. The ministers who succeeded Mr. Manston, were Mr. Thomas Hancock, Mr. John Turner, Mr. Thomas Jervis, and Mr. John Jervis.† In the year 1774,

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 283.

† Such is the statement by one of the trustees—the Rev. M. L. Yeates,—to whom I am under many obligations for his efforts to procure accurate information. The MSS. of Mr. Wilson represent Mr. Michael Martin, from Launceston, as the successor of Mr. Manston and as having returned

soon after the settlement of the last of these gentlemen, the old building was taken down and another erected on the adjoining site. Mr. John Jervis was the minister forty-seven years. "I can distinctly remember him (says my correspondent) from 1782 up to the time of his death, which occurred in 1820. So much was he respected by all denominations, that the members of the adjoining churches often left them to attend on his services. In the summer months, particularly, I have a hundred times seen twelve and thirteen carriages at a time at the yard-gate. For many years, the meeting-house was attended by the first families in the neighbourhood, forming, with others, a regular congregation of two or three hundred persons, unquestionably, the most genteel in the West of England."*

Mr. Jervis was what is generally called a Low Arian. His discourses were admired for their excellent tendency and the beauty of their composition. He was not what is usually termed eloquent, but had a plain, interesting delivery; and his devotional services were peculiarly good. These

to Launceston in 1728. Mr. Thomas Clarke, a pupil of Dr. Doddridge, was at Lympstone in 1773; but as one of the Mr. Jervis's removed and the other succeeded him in that year, Mr. Clarke was probably only an assistant. Mr. Turner entered the academy at Hoxton, in 1752, came to Lympstone about 1757, and died in 1769.

* Polwhele, with his usual brevity in all that relates to Dissent, says, (Vol. ii. 211,) "The Lees support the meeting-house in this parish near Lympstone village." As the congregation was in a flourishing state about this time, (the close of the last century,) it is probable that other highly respectable persons contributed their aid. The considerable property of the family mentioned by the historian, undoubtedly added to their influence in favour of the Dissenting cause at Lympstone, and their loss must have been severely felt.

circumstances when connected with his love of science, his excellent disposition, and his active benevolence, account for the success of his labours. During the summer preceding his death, he had been much engaged in superintending the erection of a new chapel, in the village of Lympstone, a more central situation than Gulliford; and it was intended that this building should be used exclusively in the winter, and that both should be open in the summer. His heart was in the undertaking; and to his indefatigable exertions and perseverance it owed its final accomplishment.* At his particular request, his friend Mr. Yeates, who has ever felt a lively interest in the congregation, consented to preach at the opening. But Mr. Jervis was denied this gratification; a fortnight before the time when the first tribute of prayer and praise was to have been offered in the edifice, he who watched its progress was attacked by a severe cold; and, ere the day of opening, he was summoned to join in the services of a nobler temple,—a temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Two months afterwards, when the grief occasioned by this event was slightly diminished, Mr. Yeates conducted the proposed service. This was in 1820; in 1821, Mr. Seaward, who had been some time at Poole, became the pastor of the congregation. It then rapidly declined; at first the numbers were lessened by deaths and removals; but afterwards by circumstances which might have been

* Mon. Repos.

prevented. Every minister cannot command popularity;—even if his ta'ents be considerable, his usefulness may be impaired by sectarian prejudices, and unavoidable personal defects;—but every minister can let his conversation be such as becometh the gospel of Christ. By a contrary course, the interests of pure religion are often injured far more than by the influence of ignorance or the assaults of bigotry.

A small congregation still exists at Lympstone. The chapels have been supplied, since Mr. Seaward's death, by a few ministers in the district. At present, the hearers have the services of Mr. Adams, lately the minister of the Presbyterian congregation at Marshfield.

Ministers.

Samuel Fones	1662—
Samuel Tapper	1687—1708.
Joseph Manston	1703—
Michael Martin	—1728.
Thomas Hancock	1728—1757.
John Turner	1757—1769.
Thomas Jervis	1770—1773.
John Jervis	1773—1820.
Roger Seaward	1820—1834.
Thomas Adams	1835.

Mr. SAMUEL TAPPER was the son of a gentleman at Exeter. At the age of fifteen, having been examined and approved by the Exeter ministers, he was sent to Oxford. But he proved consumptive, and his physician obliged him to hasten into his native air, which he did, and quickly recovered. His first engagement was as an assistant in the church at Holdsworthy, in Devonshire, where he was ordained, in 1657, by several ministers of the fourth division. He was afterwards presented by Cromwell to the vicarage of St. Merran, in Cornwall, which at first he scrupled to accept; but, at length, he took possession of it and continued in it till the Restoration. To his predecessor, Mr. Banbrigg, who had been sequestered, he allowed half his income, with other advantages, and they occasionally conversed together, in a friendly manner, both before and after Mr. Banbrigg was restored. He withdrew from the establishment with a charitable disposition; he was no enemy either to episcopacy or to a liturgy, but said he was not prepared to assent to a book which he could not see. His great learning, with his moderation, modesty, and candour, procured him the friendship of the Bishop of Exeter and many of the clergy, some of whom would willingly have obtained preferment for him.

After the Restoration Mr. Tapper resided, a short time, first at a place called Erisey, and subsequently at Exeter. He removed to Lympstone in 1687 and lived there till his death, satisfied with his Nonconformity, and highly respected by his congregation. He was celebrated for his familiar acquaintance with the Greek Testament, the practical strain and general usefulness of his preaching, the godly simplicity and purity of his life. He was an example of walking closely with God in secret duties, and would never venture into the world without endeavouring to engage the presence of God with him. Both to friends and enemies he discovered a generous spirit; his charity was not confined to men of particular persuasions; whoever was in distress, he accounted his brother and fit to be relieved. Mr. Tapper printed nothing, but composed a Latin inscription

for the monument of the Lord Chancellor Fortescue; translated seven books of Milton's Paradise Lost into Latin Hexameters; and left some hundreds of Latin verses on the absurdities of Popery and the rogueries of the Romish priests compared with the Pagan.*

The Rev. THOMAS JERVIS was born in 1748, at Ipswich, and died in 1833, at Brompton Grove. His father, who was a Dissenting minister at Ipswich, placed him at the academy at Hoxton, on leaving which, he was chosen to the office of classical and mathematical tutor in the academy at Exeter. About the same time he was elected minister of the congregation at Lympstone, and immediately afterwards joint minister at Topsham, with the Rev. J. Bartlett.

In 1772, an application from the Earl of Shelburne, afterwards Marquis of Lansdowne, led him to remove to Bowood to undertake the education of two of his lordship's sons. Here Mr. Jervis remained in the enjoyment of highly cultivated society, and in the faithful discharge of his important trust, during a period of eleven years. With the kind attention and friendship of the Marquis, he continued to be honoured until the time of that nobleman's death. Lord Fitzmaurice, the elder of his pupils, completed his education for the university under his first instruction. The younger, the Honourable William Granville Petty, died at a very early age, to the deep grief of all who knew him. According to Dr. Priestley's testimony, he "had made attainments in knowledge and piety beyond any thing he had observed in life;" a circumstance which may also be considered as an evidence of the knowledge and piety of his instructor and constant companion. In 1783, on the completion of this engagement, Mr. Jervis accepted the appointment of minister of the congregation at St. Thomas's, in the Borough, which he retained till 1795. Dr. Kippis, the minister at Princes Street, Westminister, dying in that year, Mr. Jervis was chosen

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 283.

his successor. In 1808, he quitted London, on receiving an invitation to succeed his friend Mr. Wood, as pastor of the society at Mill Hill chapel, Leeds. He resigned this connexion in 1818, and never afterwards engaged in any stated ministerial duties; yet he continued for several years to assist his friends with occasional pulpit services. Although permitted to reach the advanced age of eighty-six, he preserved to the last, in a very remarkable degree, the vigour, activity and cheerfulness of his mind, with few and slight interruptions to his bodily health. Notwithstanding the habitual tranquillity of his mind, Mr Jervis's attachment to the cause of civil and religious freedom was ardent as well as unshaken, and his devotional feelings were peculiarly animated, as appears from the hymns he contributed to the collection which bears his name. While he was affectionately attentive to the poor, he was able by his discourses to interest and impress the higher classes; he also carried a pure and high tone of morality into the private circles of the cultivated, and rendered virtue attractive by the charms of mildness and urbanity. With him, to use an expression of his own, "courtesy was the law of social life."

Mr. Jervis's largest publication was a volume of sermons which possess an even and sustained excellence, together with an application sometimes remarkably felicitous of the stores supplied by a classical education. It is remarkable that *his* works contain no indications of that change of sentiment which Mr. Belsham and others of his contemporaries underwent, and which is observable in *their* writings. In Mr. Belsham's charge, delivered at the ordination of Mr. Kenrick, at Exeter, in 1785, there are strong traces of orthodox sentiments; e. g. "You, remember, Sir, that the great Son of God himself when in the incarnate form he *condescended* to be a preacher of truth and righteousness, saw reason to complain 'Who hath believed our report?'" Whereas, in the discourse of Mr. Jervis "on the blessings of Christ's mission," delivered on the same occasion, although his subject led him to speak of the "author, design, and means of our salvation," there is not a phrase which in his

later years he would have modified. He here speaks as he was wont to do to the end of his days, of the "resurrection from the dead and a happy restoration to immortal life" as the main topic of Christian instruction,—as that "in which all the blessings comprised in the divine favour and forgiveness may be summed up." It cannot be too much to presume that this hope, wrought into the temper of his soul, contributed largely to his lengthened enjoyment of health, cheerful spirits, and intellectual vigour. The latter characteristic was strikingly evinced in a pamphlet written in his eighty-fourth year, in reply to Mr. Warner's traditional tale of a supernatural appearance of Mr. Petty after his decease.

Mr. Jervis married Frances Mary, daughter of his intimate friend Dr. Disney. His remains repose near those of this excellent man in the churchyard of Fryerning, Essex. To Mrs. Jervis and others who attended the couch of the dying patriarch there were many sources of consolation. The pious wish expressed in his own touching description of the termination of the Christian's life was fully verified in his own case.

> When my dim eyes are sunk in death,
> And God who gave shall take my breath;
> May he sustain my fainting heart,
> And comfort to my soul impart.
>
> May his kind presence bring relief
> From fear, despondency, and grief,
> His cheering voice direct my way
> To regions of eternal day.*

The Rev. JOHN JERVIS, F.L.S. This gentleman was distinguished by his talents and virtues, and by his acquirements in various branches of knowledge, particularly in natural history. His favourite studies were botany and mineralogy. He left a large collection of plants, and choice specimens of minerals

* Unitarian Chronicle, Vol. ii. p. 317.

scientifically arranged by his own hand. In these he found a rational, refined and permanent resource. While, with a philosophic eye, he surveyed the wonders of nature, he discerned the mighty hand which directs and regulates the whole. He conversed with the creation in his works, and felt the full force of that sublime truth,—"In wisdom hast thou made them all!"

Mr. John Jervis and Mr. Thomas Jervis were ordained together in 1779. On this occasion, Dr. Priestley preached his sermon "on the doctrine of the Divine influence on the human mind." The other parts of the service were conducted by Dr. Kippis and the Rev. Sir Harry Trelawney, the worthy Baronet having lately joined the Dissenters. "About the beginning of July, 1779, (says Mr. Howe, in a sketch of Sir Harry's life,) I met with him by appointment at Lympstone, near Exeter, at the ordination of Mr. Jervis. Sir Harry introduced the service, Dr. Kippis delivered an excellent charge, and Dr. Priestley preached an ingenious sermon which was afterwards published. There were a number of Dissenting ministers present. The afternoon was employed in conversation suitable to the characters of some of the most famous men of the age, in which Dr. Priestley, Dr. Kippis, and Mr. Towgood bore the principal part. Although they discoursed on controversial topics, and differed much in opinion from one another, yet the conversation was conducted with politeness, pleasantry, and good humour. Sir Harry expressed the highest satisfaction and said, he esteemed it the happiest event in his life, and the most favourable dispensation of Providence, which brought him acquainted with such learned, pious, and worthy men."*

Although the subject of this notice delighted to explore the natural world, his principal employments had an immediate reference to his office as a Christian minister. His habitual enjoyment of interesting scenery "exempt from public haunts" did not make him selfish; on the contrary, his chief aim was to cultivate the social virtues. In the discharge of his pastoral

* Christ. Ref., N. S., Vol. i. p. 509.

duties, he exhibited to his flock a beautiful pattern of candour, rectitude, and benevolence. During forty-seven years, they enjoyed the benefit of his pious instructions and the light of his shining example. On subjects of free inquiry and theological disquisition, his sentiments were liberal and enlightened. In private life his conversation was interesting; and he constantly promoted the happiness of those around him by his urbanity and cheerfulness. His sterling worth and unostentatious virtues not only endeared him to his intimate friends, but rendered him highly esteemed by his neighbours of all classes and of every religious persuasion. To the poor he was an invaluable friend. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted;" and his sympathy and kindness soothed and alleviated their sorrow. "The blessing of him who was ready to perish came upon him, and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." It has been shewn how anxious Mr. Jervis was to engage in the service of God, and promote the cause of religion at the time of his death. His life ended as it had been spent, amidst honourable and useful labours. During his short and final illness his mind continued calm and collected, supported by a firm yet humble reliance on the hopes and promises of the gospel.*

* Mon. Repos., Vol. xv. p. 680.

TOPSHAM.

"APSHAM—a praty tounlet on the shore, a 4 miles upper in the haven. Heere is the great trade and rode for shippes that usith this haven, and especially for the shippes and merchant mannes goodes of Excester. Men of Excester contende to make the haven to cum up to Excester self. At this tyme shippes cum not farther up but to *Apsham*."—LELAND.

"As we sail down the Exe, its peninsular appearance hath a charming effect. The town of Topsham, pleasantly situated to the south of Exeter, consists of one long street, extending north and south nearly half a mile, on the eastern bank of the river Exe; some part of which street is wide, the other contracted. There are many well-built houses interspersed throughout the town."

"The church stands about the centre of the town, built on the edge of a high cliff; so that the churchyard, in proportion to its height, commands a still more extensive view than the strand. And the scenery is extremely picturesque—a noble river, distant shipping, churches glimmering through groups of trees, a fertile vale, and a fine range of mountains, rising above each other in beautiful perspective, as far as the eye can reach."—POLWHELE.

Population in 1811,—2871; in 1821,—3156; in 1831,—3184.

OLD MEETING-HOUSE.

RELIGIOUS Liberty found a zealous advocate at Topsham so early as the year 1645. The celebrated Ames Short, M. A., of Exeter College, Oxford, then commenced his labours in this town. About five years afterwards he removed to Lyme Regis, in Dorsetshire, where he continued until the noted Bartholomew Day. Few ministers in the West of England were placed in such perilous situations at this critical period; and few acted a more distinguished and honourable part. His father disinherited him; he was several times in prison; on more than one occasion his life was in imminent danger from the violence of the soldiery; and he was frequently harassed by troublesome and frivolous accusations. Yet he survived the times of persecution, and "lived to bring forth fruit in his old age." When liberty was granted to the Dissenters, he opened a place of public worship at Lyme, in which eight candidates for the ministry were ordained during the year 1687.*

In 1662, the incumbent at Topsham was a Conformist; but the principles implanted by Mr. Short

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 458.

had taken deep root among the people. Some time after the passing of the Act of Uniformity, a Dissenting congregation was formed under the care of Mr. Benjamin Berry, who had been ejected from Mary Tavy, in this county. In 1687, we find the name of the Rev. Bernard Starr in connexion with the society;* and in the same year, Mr. William Horsham was ordained as their pastor, and commenced a long and successful career. He was at Topsham in 1715, with six hundred hearers; his name occurs again four years afterwards; and it is probable that he continued his services till 1723, when Mr. Daniel Cooper became the minister. Mr. Horsham died in 1725, and Mr. Cooper in 1727; the latter was in the morning of life, and had only been the pastor of the congregation about four years.

It was during Mr. Cooper's ministry that the present meeting-house was assigned to Trustees. The assignment was made by one individual, Mr. George Hodder, who was probably at the cost of building it; the society is designated Presbyterian. Mr. Cooper's successor was Mr. Stephen Towgood, who removed to Exeter in 1745. The society then elected Mr. Aaron Pitts, whose name is found in the list of students educated at Mr. Hallet's Academy, a strong indication of the early heterodoxy of his people. Among Mr. Pitts' fellow-students were Mr. King, afterwards Lord Chancellor; Mr. Hubert Stogdon, whose reputed heresy excited so much at-

* Mr. Wilson's MSS.

tention; and Dr. James Foster, still more celebrated for the honesty with which he formed and avowed unpopular opinions.

In 1771, the congregation, having been deprived by death of Mr. Pitts, elected as his successor Mr. J. P. Bartlett, who remained here till his own decease in 1788. The next minister was Mr. Joseph Jeffries, who resigned at the close of the following year, and was succeeded by Mr. Blatchford, who is said to have been very useful at Topsham in forming Sunday-schools on liberal grounds. When he had filled the situation six years, he went with his wife and family to some town in North America, where his ministerial services were both acceptable and lucrative, and where he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

After Mr. Blatchford's departure, the congregation were without a settled minister more than a year and a half, which proved injurious to its interests. On the first of January, 1797, Mr. John Follett, a relative of the distinguished lawyer, Sir William Follett, M. P., undertook the pastoral office, and has continued at Topsham to the present time. Many of the particulars in this account were communicated by that gentleman. He thus concludes his statement: "There is now only to add, that some desertions, several removals of residence, and numerous deaths, have gradually reduced this once large and respectable society to a very small one indeed."*

* There are a few Unitarians in the neighbouring town of Totness; but

Ministers.

Benjamin Berry	
Bernard Starr	
William Horsham	1687—1723.
Daniel Cooper	1723—1727.
Stephen Towgood	1727—1745.
Aaron Pitts.....	1746—1771.
James Perry Bartlett	1771—1788.
Joseph Jeffries	1788—1789.
Samuel Blatchford, D. D.....	1789—1795.
John Follett	1797.

they are not sufficiently numerous to form a society. They have a chapel, which was erected many years since on a piece of ground adjoining the site of a larger meeting-house then taken down in consequence of its being in a ruinous condition. The last Unitarian minister at Totness was the Rev. J. C. Wallace, now of Wareham, who settled here in 1823, and remained a few years with the hope of reviving the society. The first minister of the present chapel was the Rev. W. Johns; after this gentleman left, the Unitarians are said to have been without a minister nearly twenty years. In the list of ministers who officiated in the old building, I have Francis Whiddon, Samuel Mullins, Thomas Edgely, Henry Atkins, Samuel Carkeet, Thomas Hancock, John Reynell, Thomas Chapman, Jacob Hayes, and Henry Baynham—most of whom ranked among the firmest and most enlightened friends of truth, virtue, and liberty, in the West of England. The chapel is at present let to another denomination of Christians.

EXETER.

"THE history of the city of Exeter is lost in the remotest antiquity. Without recurring to unauthenticated legends and romantic traditions of Trojan founders and Trojan governors, Exeter may justly boast of having been a very considerable Roman station. Its beautiful and commanding position, its rapid and navigable river, the salubrity of the climate and the fertility of the surrounding country, would naturally arrest the attention of the judicious and enterprising Romans. By them it was called Isca Danmoniorum.

"The city, exclusive of the suburbs, is about a mile and a half in circumference. At an early period, it was divided into four wards or quarters—East, West, North, and South; but the castle was not included in this division. By the charter of King Charles I. the city is governed by the mayor, assisted by the recorder and eight aldermen, (who are justices of the peace,) and fifteen common council-men.

"Few towns of the same size can boast of so many churches as Exeter. Besides the cathedral and some ancient chapels, there are no less than eighteen parish churches in the city and its immediate suburbs. Very few of these edifices contribute in any degree to the embellishment of the city. Generally speaking, they are mean in appearance, half concealed by other buildings, and present little to arrest the notice of the curious antiquarian. With such a magnificent model as the cathedral in the heart of Exeter, it is matter of astonishment to strangers and visiters, that a better style of architecture does not present itself in the parish churches. But it should be observed, that several of these churches are of a date prior to the cathedral.

"Though Exeter is no longer the key and bulwark of the West of England, by the strength of her fortifications—though she has ceased to be the great mart of our staple commodity—though she cannot boast of being the theatre of many brilliant exploits in the page of English annals—though she contains not the sepulchres of any of those illustrious heroes to whom we are indebted for our Christianity, our monarchy, and our constitution—she is, nevertheless, the ornament and the first city of the West, in dignity, antiquity, and beautiful situation."—OLIVER.

Population in 1811,—18,896; in 1821,—23,479; in 1831,—28,201.

GEORGE'S MEETING.

In the early history of Dissent few places are more frequently mentioned than the city of Exeter. Ten ministers were ejected from its parishes by the Act of Uniformity, and it was the rallying place of many ôthers who lost their livings in the neighbourhood. The Nonconformists' Memorial furnishes an account of more than a hundred confessors, at this critical period, within the borders of the county of Devon. Many resorted to Exeter, and employed themselves soon after the memorable Bartholomew Day in forming congregations, notwithstanding the more than usual severity of the magistrates. At first, small parties of the adherents of the ejected pastors assembled privately in the houses of the more courageous, anxious to hear, though by stealth, the prayers and exhortations of the men whose labours had already largely promoted their spiritual improvement. And as brighter times arrived, they lost no opportunity of forming themselves into distinct societies, and manifesting openly their attachment to the cause they had cherished, at the hazard of their worldly possessions and personal safety.

The congregation now assembling in George's

Meeting consists partly of the descendants of five ancient societies. Their places of worship were called James's Meeting, Bow Meeting, Castle Lane Meeting, Mint Meeting, and the Little Meeting. The first three appear to have been built about the same time, for the use of the original Nonconformists, probably as soon as the law permitted. James's Meeting was so called in consequence of the declaration of Indulgence by James the Second; it was relinquished and converted into dwelling-houses in 1760, the year in which George's was opened. Bow Meeting was taken down in 1795; the congregation, into whose hands it had fallen, then built the Independent chapel in Castle Street; in the preceding year the Western Unitarian Society held their fourth annual meeting in the old building, *by invitation of the Trustees.* Of the Castle Lane Meeting the accounts are very scanty; it originally belonged to the Independents; what became of the place of worship does not appear. On the removal of Mr. Robert Atkinson, about the middle of the last century, the congregation united with the others.* The Mint Meeting was built by the adherents of Mr. Peirce and Mr. Hallet, in 1719, in consequence of the memorable division on the Trinitarian question. Their exertions were followed

* The founder of this congregation was the celebrated Lewis Stuckley, an ejected minister. He was succeeded by Mr. Peter Jillard, who, after living a short time at Exeter, removed to Crediton, and subsequently to Bristol. The next and only other minister besides Mr. Atkinson was Mr. George Denbury, in whose time there were about four hundred hearers.—Eng. Presb., 126.

by those of ministers of kindred sentiments till 1810, when the chapel was sold to the Wesleyans, who took it down and erected a new one on the same spot. Of the Little Meeting there are also but few particulars; it was situated nearly opposite the Friar's Gate, in Holloway, and appears to have been closed soon after the opening of George's. The localities of the Bow, Mint, and Castle Lane buildings are indicated by their respective names. George's Meeting is situated in South Street, near the South Gate, and derived its name from its being built at the time George the Third came to the crown. At this period the congregation and their pastors* manifested an extraordinary anxiety to be noted for their loyalty.

From this brief account of the meeting-houses, we proceed to the general history of the Exeter Dissenters. For many years before the passing of the Act of Uniformity, Presbyterianism maintained an almost undivided sway in the city and neighbourhood. There were a few Independents who had ministers of their own persuasion, officiating, like those of the more numerous denomination, in the cathedral and the various parish churches. Among these two bodies of Christians great harmony prevailed; a well-attended Tuesday's lecture, set on foot by Mr. Ford, was conducted by all the ministers of the city in their turn; and each church alternately had com-

* One of the Rev. M. Towgood's works is an elaborate attempt to shew that the Dissenters had the chief hand in reprobating the execution of Charles the First, and procuring the restoration of his son.

munions once a fortnight, in which the members of the other congregations were invited to participate. This union not only preserved harmony among the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations, but enabled them to diminish more effectually the influence of those enthusiasts in the city, by whom ordinances of all kinds were denounced, and many other wild notions industriously propagated. From 1650 to 1662, the established ministers pursued their courses of usefulness with great quiet and comfort. Then came those arbitrary laws which, though aiming to make the faith and worship of Christians uniform, produced the most lamentable divisions. Most of the ministers who were now ejected from their livings at Exeter were willing to make large concessions on points of ceremony and church discipline, but they could not swear their unfeigned assent to all and every thing contained in a book which they had not even time to examine. Vain were all their declarations of loyalty to the king's person and government; vain their appeals to the success which, under the blessing of God, had followed their spiritual labours. The officers to whom their remonstrances were made, intoxicated with their newly-acquired power, or influenced by the prevailing infatuation, shewed no mercy to the unfortunate pastors, and, in many cases, granted less indulgence than even the law was willing to allow.

The most eminent of the ministers for exertions and sufferings were Ford, Stuckley, Atkins, Bartlett, Gaylard, Serle, Hallet, Hoppin, and Trosse. Ford

and Stuckley were ejected from the Cathedral; Atkins, from St. John's Church; Bartlett, from St. Mary's in the Moor; Gaylard, from Ede; Serle, from Plympton; Hallet, from Chiselborough, in Dorsetshire; and Hoppin and Trosse, from colleges at Oxford. Of these ministers, five remained in and near Exeter by virtue of their previous connexion with their flocks; the others were led to settle here by persecution elsewhere, the prospect of living with friends, or invitations from newly-formed societies. These societies, as I have intimated, sprang into existence immediately on the passing of the Act of Uniformity. The majority of the adherents of the ejected ministers assembled at the usual times, though in different places, every Lord's day. But there were a few, who, though professedly belonging to the general body, contented themselves with attending the week-day services of the Dissenters, and receiving the Lord's Supper in their meeting-houses. The latter class were encouraged by several of the Exeter ministers, who refused to conduct public worship at the time of its celebration in the parish church, where they often attended, desiring by this occasional conformity to manifest a catholic spirit, and obtain toleration, if not comprehension, from the government. But in 1664 the Parliament passed the Conventicle Act, by which it was decreed, that all who should attend Dissenting worship, in the presence of more than five persons, should be subject, for the first offence to three months' imprisonment, for the second to six, and

for the third to seven years' transportation; the penalty of an escape from the latter sentence being death without benefit of clergy! Yet so resolute were the Nonconformist societies at Exeter, that this cruel act did not dissolve them. Mr. Trosse and other ministers occasionally preached with much earnestness and acceptance; and, notwithstanding the great power entrusted to sheriffs and justices of the peace, they generally avoided punishment.* This course they pursued amidst all the subsequent persecutions. In 1668, new severities were introduced, and many private meetings of Dissenters, which had been held by connivance, were broken up; in 1670, the Conventicle Act was revived with additional rigour, the effects of which produced one loud cry of distress from every part of the kingdom; the jails were crowded; informers were every where pursuing their vile occupation; soldiers were invading the peace and plundering the property of Dissenters, on pretence of searching for conventicles; while the king and his court, bidding defiance to all virtue, and intent only on their own

* "I preached once every week, (says Mr. Trosse,) and administered the sacrament every month, in the midst of violent persecutions, in private houses, sometimes by day and sometimes by night, sometimes to a smaller and at other times to a greater company. For a long time together I preached in the very heart of the city, every Wednesday, about two or three of the clock in the afternoon, to a very considerable society, which fill'd two chambers. This could not but be observed by the Church party; but for a considerable while we continued without disturbance; till at length a magistrate came upon us, and found us assembl'd. But, by God's good providence, I escaped, tho' very narrowly. For I got into another chamber, where I was hid, and though I was diligently sought for, and every coffer opened, yet could they not find me."—*Life of Trosse*, p. 91.

guilty pleasures, turned a deaf ear to the complaints of the sufferers. Yet still the Dissenters of Exeter adhered steadily to their principles, and, though now chiefly bound together by the ties of faith and love, formed an interesting and far from powerless portion of the Christian church.

In 1672, when Charles the Second pretended to compassionate the Nonconformists, the pastors in this city obtained a transient relief. Mr. Trosse, though suspecting that the king was indirectly endeavouring to bring back Popery, thought it his duty to accept a license. The Independent congregation, served by Mr. Stuckley, applied to his Majesty for a similar act of favour. It was part of the policy of the Government that such applications should be made; and various eminent Dissenters in London were employed to write to their country brethren on the subject. The following documents will shew the reader how the affair was managed:

*Letter from Mr. Butler, of London, to a Dissenter in the Country.**

Lond. Ap. 4th, —72.

I AM not unmindful of friends, and therefore thought good to offere my service to you and any of your brethren, in order to procuring licenses. [They] Shall cost nothing. Our Lon-

* The name of the Dissenter in the country I have not been able to ascertain; he probably lived in Lancashire. The documents are selected from a curious MS. note-book, containing a vast fund of information relating to the affairs of the Dissenters from 1662 to 1673. For the use which I have made of this book I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. J. S. Smallfield, of Homerton, into whose possession it came a short time

don ministers have returned thankes, and most have already taken out their licenses. Its expected that someth: by way of addresse be sent from those in the countrey. 2 examples I have sent you, coppyed by my men from the originall; the places must be mentioned and so licensed, the name of the minister and his Persuasion, and so he wid not only be licensed to this place, but to all places whatever we have licensed. If you please you may direct your letter to mee in little St. Hellens in Bishopgate Street.

I am

S^r^ your loving friend,

NICHOLAS BUTLER.

To the Kings most excellent maiestie.

The cordial acknowledgement and humble petition of a church of Christ in Exeter.

Humbly sheweth,

That your maiesties late Declara: of the suspention of the execution of the penal statutes against Nonconformity in places your ma^tie^ shall approve of hath abundantly refreshed our wearey spirits, hath given us great inducements to bless God in your ma^ties^ behalf and hath laid on us the deepest obligations to serve your ma^tie^ wth our lives and fortunes. We cannot but looke on your ma^tie^ as the breath of our nostrils, as the Repairer of our breaches and a restorer of our paths to dwell in.

May it please your ma^tie^ so far to condescend to your ma^ties^ faithful and Loyal subjects, as to give your Royall grant & favour, that Mr. Lewis Stukeley be allowed by your ma^tie^ to be our teacher, in an house belonging to Mr. Nicholas Sawney in the said citty of Exeter. And the said Mr. Stukeley & your petitioners shall ever pray for your ma^ties^ long, prosperous

since. It is particularly rich in records of the earliest proceedings of the Lancashire and Cheshire Nonconformists—records, of which, with the permission of the owner, I shall avail myself with a view to the extension, at some future period, of my historical undertaking.

& peaceable raigne, and that God would be pleased to requite your ma^ties remembering of us in our low condition.

[Signed by thirty-eight persons.]

In 1673, the declaration of indulgence was withdrawn, having continued in force only about sixteen months. Mr. Trosse immediately "desisted from public preaching on the Lord's day, and frequented the prelatical assemblies with great constancy."* He probably coincided with the mistaken opinion expressed by Alderman Love, an eminent Dissenter, in the House of Commons, that it was better for the Dissenters again to have their liberties abridged, than for the Catholics to be protected by their shield.† This forbearance, however, did not conciliate the High-Church party; the bishops and magistrates became more vehement than ever against the Nonconformists; and the King, piqued by the ill-success of his scheme in favour of Popery, issued a proclamation for putting the act against Conventicles in full force. During the interval of its suspension, Mr. Hallet, who had been ejected from a living in Dorsetshire, accepted an invitation from one of the Exeter societies;—the following memorial bears witness to the immediate revival of the persecuting spirit:

Exon, June 14, 1673.

"On Monday last, the 2nd instant, according to the order of the Mayor and Justices of the city of Exon, Mr. Joseph Hallet

* Life of Trosse. † Neal's History of the Puritans.

and Mr. John Palmer appeared before them at the Guildhall, (some hundreds of people being present,) where it was sworn against them by two witnesses, produced by one Gould, an informer, that at Mr. Palmer's house the said Mr. Hallet did preach, near 200 persons being present. The said Mr. Palmer and Mr. Joseph Hallet pleaded, in justification of the fact, the King's declaration of license, which they desired, again and again, might be publicly read, but could not obtain it. They much insisted upon the King's authority, which was (they apprehended) a sufficient warrant for what they did. But this argument would not be heard, the Mayor, Deputy Recorder, Justices, and three lawyers more called in to their assistance, telling the said Mr. Hallet and Mr. Palmer that the King had no such authority in matters ecclesiastical, it being against an Act of Parliament. To which, after it had been answered that in that very Act of Parliament ecclesiastical power was acknowledged to the King by a proviso, and that His Majesty thereupon claimed it in his declaration, they passed to another allegation, viz. that the King had revoked the declaration and licenses by taking off the great seal; and though it was answered the privy seal and His Majesty's hand were still on, the great seal being put on some months after, and not long before the Parliament sate (which the Deputy Recorder denied), yet could nothing avail; but still they denied His Majesty's authority as to the liberty he granted, and so proceeded to judge the evidence against Mr. Hallet and Mr. Palmer to be a conviction, and accordingly fined them; so that they are in hourly expectation of having their houses rifled and their goods violently carried away.

"Since which time warrants are granted against the said Mr. Hallet and Mr. Palmer for £20. each, and against thirty-five persons more, and the constables have been several times endeavouring to take the distresses."

[Signed by ten persons.]*

* English Presbyterian, p. 100.

From this year (1673) to the declaration of Indulgence in 1687, the sufferings of the Dissenters increased to a degree of which it is difficult to form an adequate conception. Yet Mr. Trosse and his brethren could not refrain from doing all in their power to keep alive the love of spiritual freedom and the desire for moral and religious improvement which still prevailed in their scattered flocks. The time of their greatest danger was that of the accession of James the Second. Though they had been harassed by frequent fines and the constant fear of informers, during fourteen long years, they proceeded with comparative security till the death of Charles, when those bloodhounds of persecution which before had only bayed at a distance, were let loose in every part of the country. It was understood at Exeter, that the surest way to obtain the favour of the new monarch was to crush, without mercy, all the advocates of freedom, and especially the undaunted, noble-minded Nonconformists. Accordingly, Trosse, Serle, Gaylard, Hoppin, and Hallet, were all seized on frivolous pretences, and committed to prison. These ministers were probably not exposed to all the hardships of the prisons of this dreadful time; their connexions, in private life, with the magistrates and other leading men in the city, procured them some abatement of the usual rigour; and from Mr. Trosse's own account we learn that fourteen wealthy friends alternately sent them a plentiful dinner every day. But the punishment was still dangerously severe; the sufferers had been

accustomed not only to enjoy the advantages of air and exercise, but to possess in their own homes all the comforts of life; nor were they insensible to the degradation of being confined in the same buildings with the most hardened criminals, to whose depraved and wicked conversation they were perpetually obliged to listen. The illegality of Mr. Trosse's commitment is shewn in the following passage, taken from his life:

"We held our meeting on Mondays, in the afternoon, about two o'clock, in a place very private and secure, as we thought, to which were several passages; and some came one way and some another to it, and in a small number, that we might the better avoid discovery. And we met in those times of danger only to pray together. But how closely and prudently soever we thought we carried it, we were discovered by a malignant neighbour, who went and informed against us to the magistrates, who were then at feast with the mayor of the city. Hereupon, no less than three magistrates, with constables, and some of the baser and ruder sort, came to find us out, and seize us. After they had searched an house or two, at length they discovered our little meeting, and found about twenty people, of whom three were aged ministers, and I the youngest of them. They gave us hard language, and treated us as if we had been the worst of malefactors. The ministers were committed to the care of the constables, to be by them conducted to one of the magistrate's houses; where, after awhile, we were sentenced to be sent to gaol, unless we would take the oath, which has these clauses in it, (viz.) 'That it is unlawful upon any pretence whatsoever to take up arms against the King, or any commissioned by him; and that we will not endeavour any alteration of government, either in Church or State.' We refused that oath. As to my own part, I declared my resolution not to take it, because by it, under some circumstances which by the provi-

dence of God might attend me, I might swear against my duty. I offered several instances and reasons which made me scruple taking that oath, but could receive no satisfactory answer. Then I desired that I might be allowed to put in the word (unlawfully), and so I would take the oath: for I was ready to declare that I would not unlawfully endeavour any alteration of government. But they told me, they could not favour me in that particular, but I must take it verbatim, as it was in the Act. Which I told them, I could by no means do. They then replied, You must go to prison. I pleaded, that the Act did not extend to me, neither were they obliged to propose the oath to me, because the law expressly says,—'That he must either be a non-conformist, turned out for non-conformity, or one convicted of keeping Conventicles.' Now I was obnoxious upon neither of these accounts; for I never had a benefice to be turned out of, neither was ever legally convicted of keeping Conventicles; but tho' I was not included in the Act, yet they committed me to prison, without any law to warrant what they did."

The declaration of Indulgence by James, though viewed in much the same light as that of his brother, mitigated the hardships of the Exeter Dissenters, and enabled them to build a meeting-house. But nothing like security was felt till some time after the landing of the Prince of Orange, which took place in the following year. His army marched from Torbay to Exeter, and here his memorable declaration was published. But the whole county was still so terrified by the executions which had followed Monmouth's rebellion, that for several days very few joined the Prince. The bishop (Lamplugh) fled to London, and carried intelligence of the invasion to the court, where he was immediately rewarded with the archbishopric of York, which had long

been kept vacant, with the intention, as was universally believed, of bestowing it on some Catholic.* Even the Dissenters of Exeter received the Prince with coldness; and while the Established Clergy refused to hear Bishop Burnet, the Nonconformist Pastors would have nothing to do with the Reverend Mr. Ferguson. This man was ejected in 1662 from a living in Kent; he afterwards followed Lord Shaftesbury to Holland, and returned to England with the Duke of Monmouth; having contrived to escape on the failure of the latter, he came back in the train of the Prince of Orange.† Clever he unquestionably was; but those who knew him best had the lowest opinion of his moral character. On his arrival at Exeter he expressed a wish to preach; the Dissenters, however, refused him the keys of the meeting-house. "Then, (he exclaimed, laughing,) I will take the kingdom of heaven by violence," and, calling for a hammer, he broke open the door with his own hand, forced his way with his sword to the pulpit,‡ and preached from Psalm xciv. 16: "Who will rise up for me against evil-doers?" This proceeding tended to injure the Prince's cause among the Dissenters; yet they expressed their willingness to support him, as soon as they became thoroughly acquainted with his views and saw him surrounded by gentlemen of influence and character.

* Hume's History, Vol. viii. p. 294.

† Noncon. Mem., Vol. ii. p. 60.

‡ Harleian Miscellany. Quoted in Eng. Presb., p. 101.

Twenty-six years had now elapsed since the passing of the Act of Uniformity. Several of those excellent men who became ministers of Nonconformist congregations at Exeter, in consequence of that event, had entered into their rest. Mr. Hallet, one of the most prominent, was drawing near the close of his honourable and useful life—happy in believing that brighter days were awaiting the cause he loved. He died in 1689, and was succeeded by Mr. George Trosse, one of the ejected students. This minister had been in early life as noted for his immorality as he was now for his piety. He was well known in Exeter, and continued to preach to Mr. Hallet's congregation till his own death, in the year 1713. His colleague was a son of Mr. Hallet, who had been chosen two years before the death of his father, and was one of the ministers at the time of the celebrated controversy which ended in the ejectment of himself and Mr. Peirce. The latter came in 1713, on the death of Mr. Trosse; and the other Presbyterian ministers at this remarkable period were Mr. Withers, chosen in 1704 to succeed Mr. Hoppin; and Mr. Lavington, appointed to fill up another vacancy two years after the settlement of Mr. Peirce. The Exeter Nonconformists were now numerous and powerful; they comprised a large portion of the most religious, industrious, and affluent inhabitants; many were thriving tradesmen and manufacturers, whose success in the world, so far from being retarded by their opinions, now that persecution had relaxed its

hold, was rather increased by the freedom and enterprise in secular concerns which those opinions generated. There were three Presbyterian congregations; two had their two respective pastors; and the third was ministered to by each of the four ministers in rotation; a committee of thirteen was entrusted with the general management of their congregational affairs—the contributions of the whole body being thrown into a common stock and divided equally.* Hitherto no material difference had been openly avowed with regard to points of faith; the more abstruse doctrines had not been often introduced in public, and those who questioned them in private were anxious to avoid the discredit of not believing them; each minister had been obliged at his ordination to sign the Articles of the Church of England, and this was generally deemed a sufficient guarantee for the orthodoxy of the teachers. But we are now come to the time when new light broke in upon the minds of many, and all old tests proved utterly ineffectual.

* "I shall here take occasion (says Mr. Peirce) to speak a little of this committee of thirteen, that the reader may understand somewhat of our constitution. At the first liberty of conscience granted, if I am rightly informed, by King James II., it was thought necessary that some persons should be appointed to take care of the building places of worship, and other temporal affairs of the Dissenters. The number of these, by I know not what accident, was then thirteen, and has continued so ever since. They fill up their number themselves, as any vacancy happens. This gave great uneasiness to some of the people, who thought it was regular they should be chosen by the whole body. They were never intrusted with any thing, that I can understand, but the care of our temporal affairs, tho' upon this occasion they thought fit to assume another kind of power, without any authority from the body."—*Western Inquisition*, p. 49.

The controversy commenced in the year 1717 The pastors were Hallet, Withers, Peirce, and Lavington. Lavington was the only one who had not a leaning towards liberal views. Those views had been partially adopted in Mr. Hallet's academy; and there the foundation of the controversy was laid so early as the year 1710.* At this time Mr. Whiston corresponded with the tutor's eldest son, by whom the opinions of that celebrated man were communicated to John Fox, another inquisitive and free-minded student. His own account is too interesting to be omitted.

"I was more intimate with him (Hallet) than with any of the rest of the young men, but knew nothing of his notions till our class was lectured on Pictet's chapter concerning the Trinity. He then laid several books upon that subject in my way, which extremely surprised me, for I had always taken this doctrine for an undoubted truth, which was never to be examined or called in question. I remember what startled me most was the famous Mr. Boyse's answer to Emlyn. At that time I had never heard of either of their names, and knew nothing of the prosecution of the latter, or any part of his story, and therefore could not possibly have any bias or prejudice upon me. But the bare quotations which Boyse made from Emlyn, in order to answer him, seemed to strike so strongly that I began to doubt from that moment, notwithstanding my own natural prejudices and

* At this time the Academy had not been long established. The leading incidents in the life of Mr. Hallet, Jun., being mentioned in the history of the congregation, a separate memoir will not be needed. His character as a teacher has been drawn by Mr. John Fox, of Plymouth, in papers to which I shall often refer. The chief faults imputed to him are an excessive love of ministerial power, and a disposition to cherish unfriendly feelings towards a conscientious opponent. Yet his conduct in reference to the Exeter controversy indicates the possession of many excellent qualities.

all the art and learning of Mr. Boyse. We were about five or six of us who understood one another in this affair, but we conversed with great caution and secresy."*

This account of the first approach to reputed heresy is thus corroborated by Mr. Peirce:

"The common vogue of the people is, that there was nothing of this doctrine in the city before my coming into it; that I was the first who brought it among them; and abundance of reproaches and untoward wishes have been bestowed upon me for this cause. But there is no truth in this report. Dr. *Clarke*, Mr. *Whiston*, and other writers who differ from the common notion, had been read here before my coming; and some few of the people, tho' they kept it to themselves, had long before, *by only reading their Bibles*, been convinced that it was not agreeable to the Scriptures."†

In the year 1715, the subject began to be much talked of, both in public and private. The Deity of Christ was often disputed, particularly in the house of a layman who boarded some of Mr. Hallet's pupils. Rumours that three of the ministers disbelieved that doctrine and secretly opposed it, were circulated among the citizens.‡ In 1717, the attention to the question had become so general, and the suspicions of Mr. Peirce's orthodoxy so

* "Memoirs of himself by Mr. John Fox," Mon. Rep., Vol. xvi. p. 131.

† Western Inquisition, p. 11.

‡ "Account of the Reasons why many of the Citizens of Exeter have withdrawn from the ministry of Mr. Joseph Hallet and Mr. James Peirce," p. 4. This "Account" and "the Western Inquisition" supply most of the information in the next few pages. The latter is written by Peirce; the former by one of his opponents. I shall aim to state such facts as are admitted on both sides.

strong, that he was applied to by three of his most influential friends to preach a sermon on the satisfaction of Christ, a doctrine which they thought must be entirely overthrown by a denial of our Lord's deity. With this request Mr. Peirce complied; and his mode of treating the subject, though far from being such as to remove all fears respecting the soundness of his own creed, tended to restore peace for a short time. But the seeds of dissension had been sown in a favourable soil; and many circumstances occurred which irritated both parties, and appeared to render a public collision unavoidable. The Exeter Assembly was at this period a very important body, and was generally considered entitled to take cognizance of such matters. It was fully expected that the subject would be introduced at their September meeting in this year (1717), in reference to the case of Mr. Hubert Stogdon, who was said to be "very bold in his errors," and yet wanted from the Assembly a certificate for his ordination.* But the breach was postponed in consequence of Stogdon's receiving a certificate from Hallet, Withers, and Peirce, three months before the meeting, which enabled him to dispense with the sanction of the Assembly, and to be ordained among a people in Somersetshire who had invited him to be their pastor. Although the granting this certificate was censured by the orthodox, all parties were glad to get Stogdon out of the way; his candour in searching for truth, and his

* See History of the Ashwick congregation.

manliness in avowing his opinions, had occasioned much of the animosity at Exeter; and after he was gone there was another transient calm. This lasted about three months. In January, 1718, the lay advocates of the new opinions began to boast of their numbers and their strength among the ministers, even defying the Assembly to take cognizance of it. "It was high time (says one of the other party*) to make a public affair of it; accordingly, the committee of thirteen, with several other citizens, met, and, after consulting together, deputed four of their body to lay the state of the city before their ministers, and to desire them to preach in defence of the Eternal Deity of Jesus Christ." Mr. Peirce says the request was "to assert the eternity of the Son of God."† At all events, he acted on this occasion in a manner which no one who values Christian Liberty can condemn. He thought himself as capable of choosing proper subjects as the committee of thirteen or any other section of his congregation. He told them that he could not venture to assert any thing of God which he did not perceive he had asserted of himself. However, he introduced the subject in question in one of his subsequent sermons. To many persons he gave satisfaction, and these united with him in endeavouring to restore peace. Still, there were a few under the guidance of Lavington and two or three country ministers, who continued to stir up strife.

A few months more passed away. The May

* Account of Reasons, p. 6. † Western Inquisition, p. 50.

Assembly (1718) dispersed without noticing the affair. Six weeks of the months of July and August were spent by Mr. Peirce in London. He satisfied himself with the idea that all was quiet and would remain so. Mr. Lavington, however, availed himself of his colleague's absence to promote new schemes of discord. He joined with Mr. Ball, of Honiton, Mr. Walrond, of Ottery, and several others, in exciting the Dissenters of the West against the suspected ministers. Mr. Peirce, on his return, found "all was in a flame again"; the heresies were viewed in a worse light than ever, and were certainly to be brought before the Assembly in September. A preliminary meeting was held on the day before that on which the reverend body formally met, for the purpose of arranging their proceedings. It was proposed that "the growth of Arianism rendered it necessary that they should purge themselves and clear their reputation to the world." Some one expressed his surprise that the Exeter ministers were so backward. Mr. Peirce replied, that he could not speak without some concern, seeing he apprehended they were about to sap the foundation he stood upon as a Christian, a Protestant, and a Dissenter: and in the course of his speech he called for a text in which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were called the One God. The orthodox party only answered by dwelling upon consequences. A long discussion ensued, in the course of which Mr. Peirce charged a minister "who was forward to answer him" with the absur-

dity of his prayers, which he had heard him begin thus: "O Lord God, Jehovah, we know thou art Father, Son, and Spirit—we thank thee for giving us thy Son—and we pray thee give us thy Spirit." Even several of the most orthodox ministers had objected to this practice. In connexion with this circumstance, Mr. Peirce notices* an accusation which one of his brethren had made against him, of not giving glory to the Holy Ghost in his doxologies. The passage affords a fair specimen of the objections to Mr. Peirce, and the manner in which they were met:

"The next time we met he did not reprove me so indirectly, but downright censured my practice. I put it then to him, as I used to do, whether he had any scripture example for giving glory to the Holy Ghost in the many doxologies extant. His answer was, that he did not suppose he was left out in those doxologies, as tho' the Apostles scrupled the giving glory to him; and that certainly we might as well give glory to him as baptize in his name. I told him I supposed the Apostles might understand how to draw such a consequence as well as we; and since we do not find they ever did draw it, I thought there could be no necessity for it; and that my practice of giving glory to the Father, thro' the Son, or of giving glory to the Son, was scriptural and unexceptionable."

At the preliminary meeting, Mr. Withers made a noble speech against bringing any test at all into the Assembly, and particularly against the proposed declaration—"I believe the Father, Word, and Spirit to be the one God." On the following morn-

* Western Inquisition, p. 78.

ing the Assembly met, and, after prayer, Mr. John Ball, of Honiton, commenced by desiring to know whether they should declare against the errors of those who denied the divinity of the Saviour, and made a motion accordingly, which was seconded. First, there was a long debate on the expediency of discussing the question, which being affirmed, it was moved that the particular errors and heresies be mentioned, that the brethren might know what they had to declare against; which was not granted. It was next resolved that the Declaration should be concerning the errors relating to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; and then followed a long discussion on the grand point, "Shall a declaration in words of Scripture be considered orthodox"; "but this point (says Mr. Peirce) could by no means be obtained." Several other questions were proposed in vain,—such as "the use to be made by the Assembly of the Declarations they did not like;" or the proceedings to be resorted to in consequence of such declarations. It was now impossible to continue the debate, as the people were waiting at the door of the meeting-house to hear the usual lecture, the time for which was fully come; and it was therefore agreed that each minister should at once declare in whatever words he thought fit. Mr. Hallet, of Exeter, began; he was followed by Mr. Withers; and next came Mr. Peirce. The greater part of Mr. Hallet's declaration was in the language of Scripture; it appears that he believed the Father to be in some sense Supreme, yet Christ to be "God

over all, blessed for evermore," and the Holy Ghost to be God, on the ground that "the temples of believers are said to be the temples both of the Holy Ghost and of God"; he did not say that he believed the Holy Ghost to be a being distinct from God, forming the third person in the Trinity, neither did he explain the sense in which he received the word God when applied to Christ; he concluded his declaration with the words of Mr. Baxter: "Two things have set the Church on fire, and been the plagues of it above a thousand years;—first, enlarging our creed and making more fundamentals than God ever made; secondly, composing (and so imposing) our creeds and confessions in our own words and phrases," &c. Mr. Withers was one degree more satisfactory to the dominant party; he defined the heresy of Arius, and sincerely disclaimed it; he declared his belief that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were one in Deity, nature, essence, and substance, but that the New Testament and the most primitive Christian writers held forth a distinction of persons. Mr. Peirce said, "I am not of the opinion of Sabellius, Arius, Socinus, or Sherlock. I believe there is but one God, and can be no more. I believe the Son and Holy Ghost to be divine persons, but subordinate to the Father: and the unity of God is, I think, to be resolved into the Father's being the fountain of the divinity of the Son and Spirit." Some of the ministers, instead of making any declaration of their own, expressed their agreement with Mr. Hallet; others used the words of the

Assembly's Catechism, besides a great variety of phrases of their own invention; three members of the body refused to make any declaration at all, and disowned the authority of any body of men to demand their opinion. At length it was recorded by the Scribe, at the dictation of Mr. Lavington,—"'Tis the general sense of this Assembly—*That there is but One Living and True God; and that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are the One God.*"

No objection was formally made by the Assembly to any of the declarations. The ministers, however, returned to their homes, with the belief that, notwithstanding all that had been done, Arianism would spread. And so it did. Soon after the account of the discussion was communicated to the citizens, the Exeter press teemed with pamphlets in defence of the "new heresy." From the account given by the Trinitarian party, it appears that the authors of these productions, whose names were unknown, held most of the opinions of the modern Unitarians. Many of the disputants on this side of the question were laymen. It cannot be denied that, at this period, *their* sentiments were expressed with much greater clearness than those of the heterodox *ministers;* whatever were the actual conclusions to which the latter had come on the points at issue, there was great ambiguity in some of their public declarations. They were certainly influenced in some measure by the dread of being burthened with those calumnious accusations which have been, in all ages, heaped upon men who have ventured to

wander from the beaten tracks of theology, and which, at the time in question, were peculiarly dangerous to the interests, the reputation, and the usefulness of Christian ministers. By Mr. Lavington and his friends, the anonymous pamphlets to which I have adverted were harshly denounced as blasphemous, and the arguments of the authors were met, sometimes by similar weapons, but frequently by fierce invectives and threats of present and eternal punishment. It was impossible that the ministers should escape the storm; accordingly, two months after the Assembly met, the committee of thirteen once more applied to the ministers "to know what they did believe about these matters themselves." The result of this interview and other circumstances connected with it were so unsatisfactory, that "the citizens (to use the words of the Trinitarian writer) thought it high time to shift for themselves, and sent to some eminent ministers of London for advice, whose counsel was,—to call in some neighbouring ministers, who could best judge of these matters upon the place." This plan was adopted; the ministers met and drew up their opinion, which was, in fact, that the orthodox ought to separate themselves from Messrs. Peirce, Hallet, and Withers. Withers prevented the committee from acting upon the opinion as it regarded himself, by giving the required satisfaction; but the others continued firm. Accordingly, the day after these seven ministers had consulted together, and formed the above resolutions, three of the four proprietors of

the chapels, went, in their own name, to the place where Messrs. Peirce and Hallet usually preached, and took the keys of it into their own possession. They sent no message to their ministers to inform them of their intentions; and when Mr. Peirce applied to one of them to know what he was to do, all the answer he could obtain was, that he might preach an old sermon in the Little Meeting. The week following, a general meeting was held of all the proprietors or trustees of the three chapels, at which they came to a resolution, that Messrs. Peirce and Hallet should preach no more in any of them.* Mr. Peirce complained that this was altogether unfair—that the seven neighbouring ministers had all along been decidedly opposed to him—and that the proprietors of the meeting-house acted by themselves and did not call the people together. These were forcible objections; but it was urged, on the other side, that conferences had on various occasions been declined by Mr. Peirce, and that the proprietors not only "thought the doctrine of the Trinity and the deity of Christ were too great matters to be offered to the vote or made the subject of contention," but had good reasons for believing the majority approved of their conduct.

A calm review of the whole case suggests various apologies for the part which was acted by the Trinitarians. They attached incalculable value to their opinions, and saw that those opinions were in danger of being subverted by the influence of the ministers

* P. D. M., Vol. ii. p. 448.

whom they invited and long considered orthodox. They also saw that the places of worship which they had built at considerable expense, were gradually becoming subservient to the dissemination of views which many called blasphemous and fatal. Moreover, their fears were increased by the well-known fact, that what they deemed heresy was not openly inculcated, but that some friends of Peirce and Hallet carried on a secret mode of proselytising which appeared likely to be more hurtful to their cause than open warfare. And if, on one side, it be asserted that Mr. Lavington and his party were guilty of deceitful transactions, it cannot be denied, on the other, that the heterodox occasionally concealed their opinions on important topics, and endeavoured to give them a popular colouring. That the heterodox ministers wished for peace is very evident; but it is a question whether, in pursuing what they believed to be a Christian object, they did not sometimes resort to unworthy compromises. These considerations are perfectly compatible with a full appreciation of the difficulties in which they were placed—with high admiration of many parts of their conduct—and with a firm persuasion that the cause of religious truth and religious liberty is deeply indebted to them. In the first place, they dared to inquire and decide for themselves, when it was the universal custom to be guided implicitly by established formularies, and they subsequently maintained their convictions, and advocated the great principle of the sufficiency of Scripture,

amidst the clamours of ignorance, prejudice, and bigotry, at the risk of losing friends, reputation, means of subsistence,—all, indeed, that most men value!

In this trying emergency, Mr. Peirce and Mr. Hallet were supported by many who valued their ministry and admired their general conduct. They therefore immediately formed a new society; and having, with much difficulty, procured a temporary place of worship, it was opened on the fifteenth of March, 1719, the first Lord's day after the ejectment. The sermon was preached by Mr. Peirce; it is entitled "The Evil and Cure of Divisions," and while breathing a generous spirit of forbearance, inculcates sentiments of Christian liberty which cannot be too much admired.* About a

* The following extract will shew the spirit of this sermon: "In short, we glory not in men, ancient or modern, or in any other name but that of Christ; his disciples, and his alone, we pretend to be. We neither do nor will call any man upon earth Master. Plain, undisguised Christianity, as 'tis contained in the Scriptures, is the religion we profess. We set up in opposition to none, but are ready to receive all good Christians, and join with all, so far as their worship is agreeable to the sacred rule; and according to that alone do we desire to order our own.

"It has been artfully insinuated, that our design is here to preach upon speculative points, and to teach a new doctrine, and a new religion; than which nothing is farther from our intention. You can't but know, that 'twas never my custom among you, to entertain my auditors with abstruse matters of speculation of any kind; and 'twas a more than ordinary importunity, that prevail'd with me twice only to treat of such. And I have much satisfaction in looking back upon the general course of my preaching, which has been design'd to explain the Holy Scriptures, and inculcate the duties and virtues of the Christian life; nor can I see reason for making any alteration in that respect. And therefore, as we dreaded the division before it was made, and were very willing to go on in the way in which we were, so we profess we have no intention to alter our preaching, now the division is made, supposing that it should never be healed. I declare, I

year afterwards, his congregation erected a new and more commodious edifice, called the Mint Meeting. Here he officiated only about six years; his life, which had been much imbittered by the treatment he had experienced, terminated in 1726.* Mr. Peirce† and Mr. Hallet were succeeded by the son of the latter—who was the author of many valuable tracts, but better known in consequence of his "Critical Notes and Observations on the Scriptures." He it was with whom Whiston corresponded twenty-five years previously, and in whose ingenuous mind were planted those principles which

set not up in opposition to any opinion, or any men who do not invade my Christian liberty, nor to teach any other religion than that which was from the beginning, and which I have taught all along from my first coming, when my endeavours were more acceptable."—*The Evil and Cure of Divisions*," pp. 31—33.

* We learn the number of the congregation at this period, from an interesting letter written by the learned Samuel Crellius to La Croze, discovered by the Rev. James Yates, in the *Thesaurus Epistolicus La Crozianus*, and communicated by that gentleman through the Christian Reformer (N. S.), Vol. i. p. 822. The letter is dated Amsterdam, July 17, 1727; it was written after a visit to London, where the author had just published, under the name of Artimonius, a Latin treatise on the Proem of the Gospel of John. His account of the London Unitarians of that period, the kind treatment he received from the most celebrated orthodox theologians of the Church of England, and his interviews with Venn, Waterland, and Sir Isaac Newton, is extremely interesting. With regard to this city he says, "But at Exeter the Presbyterians do not allow Arians in their body, on which account the Arians, *to the number of about three hundred*, have formed a separate congregation, and have their own preachers. There they meet openly and in peace, to attend sermons and their sacred rites, without being disturbed by the magistrate. James Peirce, a man of first-rate learning, who died last year, was their minister."

† On the death of Mr. Peirce, in 1726, the congregation at the Mint Meeting proposed to invite Mr. Emlyn, who, hearing of their intentions, excused himself on account of his feebleness and advancing years.—Mon. Repos., Vol. xii. p. 523.

subsequently excited so much attention.* His assistant in the duties of the ministry at the Mint Meeting was Mr. Thomas Jeffrey, who published several useful treatises on the Nature and Perfection of the Christian Revelation. The next minister was Mr. William West, a good scholar and an amiable man, noted for his great attention to mathematical studies, and for that closeness of argument which they tend to produce. He was succeeded by Mr. David Williams, who introduced the Liturgy used at Liverpool into this society; he afterwards removed to London, where he opened a chapel in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square; he had the honour of being the Founder of the Literary Fund. On his removal, in 1770, Mr. Joseph Bretland was chosen, and the Liturgy was laid aside. After officiating about two years he resigned, and was succeeded by Mr. John Hogg. The duration of this gentleman's ministry was shortened by his engaging in business, and in 1789 Mr. Bretland was re-elected. In 1792 Mr. B. again introduced the Liturgy, at the request of the congregation; but at the end of another year he felt his mind oppressed with difficulties

* Three Joseph Hallets,—father, son, and grandson, succeeded each other at Exeter. The sound judgment of the last is shewn by the circumstance, that there is scarcely a conjectural emendation of the Hebrew text proposed by him, which was not afterwards found by Dr. Kennicott, in some manuscript, to have been an ancient reading. Neither the learning nor the candour displayed in his "Notes and Observations," preserved him from a violent attack from Mr. Enty, who was chosen by the Trinitarian party on his father's ejectment, and to whom he replied, in a pamphlet, the following year. He also published, in 1720, an ingenious tract to prove that the unity of God is not inconsistent with the deity of Christ, in answer to Dr. Waterland.—Eng. Presb., p. 127.

in the use of it, and again resigned his office. Soon after his first entrance on his duties at the Mint, he avowed Unitarian principles from his pulpit. He then stood alone, in the West of England, as the preacher of the true unity of God and humanity of Christ, and was exposed in consequence to peculiar obloquy. Mr. Bretland was succeeded, in 1794, by Mr. Theophilus Edwards, who continued to be pastor of the society till the year 1810, when it was united to that of George's Meeting. Of Mr. Edwards a short memoir will be given under the head of Tavistock, where he was settled twenty-two years. On the sale of the chapel to the Wesleyans, it was agreed that the monument to the memory of its founder, which adorned its walls, should be removed to George's Meeting. The society which he formed had existed about ninety years, on the simple and scriptural principles stated in his opening sermon; and when its members parted with the house of prayer in which he had exerted himself in the cause of Christian truth and liberty, it was to join a larger body supporting the same cause, and partly consisting of descendants of those by whom he was ejected.

To return to the memorable division in 1719,—Mr. Peirce and Mr. Hallet were succeeded by Mr. John Enty, of Plymouth, and Mr. Walter Furze, of Bristol. The old congregations continued to act in concert on all important occasions, but had no communication with their heretical brethren at the Mint Meeting. Enty and Furze were considered pastors of the

congregation at James's, though they occasionally officiated at Bow, and probably at the Little Meeting. Furze removed in 1724, and was succeeded by Mr. James Green; and Enty's death, in 1743, was the means of introducing Mr. Stephen Towgood. In 1749 his cousin, Mr. Micaijah Towgood, was chosen by the united congregations on the death of Mr. Green. The election of this gentleman is an important event in the history of the Exeter Dissenters, whether we consider the length of his ministry or the moral efficacy of his services and character. He had relinquished the doctrine of the Trinity when he accepted the invitation from the societies assembling at the James's and Bow Meetings; this circumstance was one of some difficulty in the minds of the people, as well as in his own; and for a long time he found the greatest prudence necessary to overcome the impediments which his Arianism presented. "Mr. Towgood (says his biographer) never gave up what he thought an essential article of faith in order to please men; but by his justly acquired reputation as a writer, by diligent and affectionate assiduity in the various branches of the pastoral office, and by the force of Christian meekness, condescension, and a readiness to do them all kinds of good offices, he conciliated their affection and esteem, and constrained them to forego their objections."* The first important alteration accomplished by this judicious reformer, was in the admission of members to the

* Manning's Life of Towgood, p. 43.

Lord's table. He found that his new flock had been used to require a more particular examination of the candidate than he thought the Scriptures countenanced. In his opinion, "that examination tended to discourage meek, humble, and modest persons, while it rendered the communion easily accessible to men of bold and forward dispositions, who were tempted to declare more than they really experienced, lest the church should reject them. He esteemed a Christian life a very sufficient and a much better rule, because he did not find the Scriptures required any other; and if the society were satisfied of this, he thought it not material by what means it received the information. From this time, therefore, it was left to the ministers to converse privately with the candidate, and inquire into his knowledge of the nature and design of this ordinance, and whether his views in desiring to join in it were sincere and upright. When the ministers were satisfied on these points, they mentioned the name of the person one month preceding his admission." Mr. Stephen Towgood and Mr. Micaijah Towgood continued to officiate in James's Meeting, pursuing the same liberal course of acting, till the year 1760, when the society removed to the new meeting, called George's, where it continued to enjoy their services many years.

We now revert to the history of the Bow congregation. At the time of the controversy, its ministers were Mr. Withers and Mr. Lavington. Withers died in 1729, and was succeeded by Mr. Walrond,

of Ottery, who had taken an active part in the "Western Inquisition." Lavington, who found him a congenial associate, lived till 1759, when no successor was chosen, the two churches being supplied by the three surviving ministers. One of these was Mr. Abraham Tozer, who had succeeded Walrond in 1755; and although the three ministers preached by rotation at the two meeting-houses, Mr. Tozer continued regularly to administer the Lord's Supper at Bow, and Stephen and Micaijah Towgood at George's. In the year 1776, the two congregations invited Mr. Manning to be an assistant to the latter gentlemen—the elder of whom dying in the following year, he was chosen co-pastor with Mr. M. Towgood, and from this time the two societies have been still more closely united.

The Bow meeting-house was taken down in 1795. In reference to the meeting of the Western Unitarian Society, held within its walls the preceding year, there was a curious correspondence between Counsellor White, one of the Trustees of George's, and Dr. Toulmin. The latter had given a notice, by request of Mr. Kenrick, for whom he officiated at George's, that the meeting would be held in that place. The Trustees, for some reason not explained, assembled on the day after the notice was given, were unanimously of opinion that the house should not be opened on the occasion, and gave directions accordingly. A note was then sent to Mr. Kenrick, from the Trustees of the Bow Meeting, inviting him and his friends to "make that use of the Bow

meeting-house on the morrow which their ancestors had been accustomed to glory in, viz. worshiping the Great God according to the dictates of their own consciences."* The circumstances in which the invitation was given enhanced its value. It was at the time when the French Revolution and the Birmingham Riots had made some Dissenters timid and compromising. The illustrious Priestley, too conscious of the importance of his sentiments to conceal them, and too well convinced that the manly avowal of them in his own country would endanger his liberty and life, had just fled to the shores of the New World! Moreover, the Western Unitarian Society assumed a decided tone; it considered "every practice as idolatrous which attributed any of the prerogatives of the Deity to another;" and its preamble was so framed that the Arians, who were then numerous at Exeter and other towns in the West, could not consistently become members. All these circumstances render the offer of the Bow meeting-house for the use of the society worthy of no common praise.†

It was not long before the congregation at

* This correspondence was published, together with the sermon preached before the Society, by the Rev. T. Reynell.

† In connexion with the feeling on the subject of Dr. Priestley's unpopularity, it should be recorded here that the Exeter Assembly of Ministers, at their half-yearly meeting in September, 1791, voted an admirable address to that excellent man, in reference to his late sufferings. The address was forwarded by Mr. Bretland—one of the warmest admirers of the Doctor's character and talents.—See Rutt's edition of Priestley's Works; Life, Vol. i. Part ii., p. 154. The same interesting volume contains an address to Dr. Priestley from Protestant Dissenters in Bristol and Bath, and the reply addressed to Dr. Estlin. This appears to have been the only *congregational* address in the West of England.

George's Meeting imbibed a similar spirit. Mr. Kenrick, who succeeded Mr. Towgood in 1784, became a decided Unitarian, and, though living in perfect harmony with his colleague, often inculcated Unitarian sentiments. His labours, however, as one of the ministers, had no exclusive reference to points of doctrine; he laid the surest foundation for the future welfare of the society by diligently and judiciously imparting knowledge to the young. By his efforts, a congregational library was formed for the use of his classes, who, on their part, gave many proofs of attachment and gratitude to their affectionate instructor. On the sudden removal of this excellent man, the congregation elected one whose greatest delight was to carry on the useful plans of his predecessor. The settlement of Dr. Carpenter was attended by favourable circumstances; he had made an explicit avowal of Unitarian sentiments, and was yet unanimously invited; the congregation had acted with the full concurrence of Mr. Manning; and all parties publicly resolved to co-operate in instructing the young. Dr. Carpenter remained at Exeter twelve years. His labours in the city in forming and maintaining institutions for the diffusion of useful knowledge are still remembered by many. To the cause of Unitarianism, not only in his immediate neighbourhood, but throughout the West of England, great benefit accrued from his active and unwearied exertions.*

* One controversy in which Dr. Carpenter was engaged, particularly requires to be mentioned. In the year 1814, soon after the passing of Mr. Smith's bill for the repeal of the penal laws against the Unitarians,

On Dr. Carpenter's removal to Bristol, the congregation elected Mr. W. Hincks, who had received his education at Manchester College, York, and who, after devoting several years to the ministry at Exeter and Liverpool, accepted the situation of Mathematical Tutor in the same college.

The next minister was Mr. Acton. This gentleman received his education for the ministry under Dr. Morell, of Brighton, and officiated a short time

the Bishop of St. David's published, in the form of "a brief memorial," his regret that such laws had been repealed, and his belief that they ought to be restored. This uncharitable production was quickly followed by another from the same pen, entitled "An Address to persons calling themselves Unitarians," advertised in an Exeter newspaper, with harsh remarks on what the advertiser called "the debasing, degrading doctrines of Socinianism." Dr. Carpenter deemed it right to publish, in reply, a statement of the Unitarian faith, which produced a letter from the Rev. Mr. Cleeve, a clergyman of the Established Church. The editor of one of the Exeter papers (Flindell's Western Luminary) having thrown open his columns to the disputants, a controversy ensued, which extended through several months, and called forth in its progress many additional pens and much interest in the western counties. It was at length supposed to be concluded by an article from the editor, professing to be an impartial summing up. At that period, however, there happened to be living in Devonshire a clergyman, since celebrated as a witty author, who could not resist the temptation (though the subject as well as some of the facts were against him) to write the following lines in a subsequent paper:

Cleeve—Dennis—Carpenter—agree!
And fully prove a Trinity;
For, in their writings, all may see
Not one incomprehensible—but *three!*

Yet Flindell deemed the task undone,
So finished what these scribes begun,
And shewed more clearly than the sun
Not three incomprehensibles—but *one!*

See Carpenter's Edition of "Letters on the Trinitarian Controversy in the Exeter Newspapers"; the Mon. Repos., Vol. x. p. 192; and Colton's Lacon, Vol. ii. p. 70.

at Walthamstow. Amidst numerous changes Mr. Manning remained; but at length his time of departure arrived; he died in September, 1831, having filled the pastoral office here fifty-five years. On the death of Mr. Manning, Mr. Cropper, who had been educated at Glasgow, and some time minister at Bolton, in Lancashire, became the colleague of Mr. Acton. Under the ministry of these gentlemen the congregation maintains its high character.

About two years since, a liturgical form of worship was introduced. The usual services are in the morning and afternoon; during the winter months there is an additional service in the evening, when lectures are delivered which excite considerable attention.*

The members of this society support the usual congregational institutions. They have a good chapel library, which was formed at the suggestion of Mr. Kenrick. Their Sunday-school was established in 1812, and consists at present of sixty boys and fifty-six girls. Their fellowship-fund was probably instituted soon after Dr. Thomson, of Leeds, drew attention to this method of aiding the cause of Unitarian Christianity. The congregation at George's Meeting have also the management of the Protestant Dissenters' Charity School, established in the year 1710; thirty boys and twenty-six girls at present attend on the Sunday at George's Meet-

* Mr. Acton has published in one small volume, "Six Lectures on the Dignity, Office, and Work of our Lord"; another, in the form of a pamphlet, "on the Religious Opinions of Milton, Locke, and Newton"; and several single sermons.

ing, and are educated during the week at the school in Paris Street; they are also annually clothed.

The congregation have a burial-ground in another part of the city. In the lecture-room at George's Meeting is a tablet, with the following inscription:

THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED
BY MOURNFUL FRIENDS
AS A LASTING TESTIMONY OF THEIR HIGH REGARD
TO THE MEMORY AND HONOUR
OF THE REVEREND, PIOUS, AND LEARNED
MR. JAMES PEIRCE,
A MOST WORTHY AND INDEARED PASTOR OF THIS CHURCH,
A RATIONAL, JUDICIOUS, AND AFFECTIONATE PREACHER,
A VERY LABORIOUS AND SAGACIOUS INTERPRETER
OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,
A SINCERE LOVER AND STRENUOUS DEFENDER OF TRUTH,
A COURAGIOUS SUFFERER WHILE LIVING
FOR MAINTAINING THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL
OF CHRIST,
AND FOR ASSERTING THE LIBERTIES OF CHRISTIANS;
AND AFTER DEATH, DENIED A JUST ENCOMIUM
ON HIS TOMB IN LEONARD'S CHURCH YARD
BY THE RECTOR OF THE PARISH.*
THE GREAT GOOD MAN DEPARTED HENCE
IN PEACE,
MARCH 30th, 1726,
IN THE 53rd YEAR OF HIS AGE.

PHILIPP. I. 21.
REV. XIV. 13.

"TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN."
"BLESSED ARE THE DEAD THAT DIE IN THE LORD."

* A copy of this encomium, both in Latin and English, will be found in the memoir of Mr. Peirce. The above inscription was sent me, with the particulars relating to the schools, by Mr. B. P. Pope, of Exeter.

Ministers.

JAMES'S MEETING.

Joseph Hallet	1670—1689.
George Trosse	1689—1713.
Joseph Hallet (Second)	1690—1719.
James Peirce	1713—1719.
John Enty	1719—1743.
Walter Furze	1719—1724.
James Green	1724—1749.
Stephen Towgood	1743—1760.
Micaijah Towgood	1750—1760.

BOW MEETING.

Robert Atkins, M.A.	1662—1685.
Robert Gaylard	1662—
John Horpin	1662—1704.
Benjamin Hooper	1662—
John Withers	1704—1729.
John Lavington	1715—1759.
John Walrond	1729—1755.
Abraham Tozer	1755—1794.

MINT MEETING.

James Peirce	1719—1726.
Joseph Hallet (Second)	1719—1722.
Thomas Jeffrey	1728—17
Joseph Hallet (Third)	1722—1744.
William West	1744—1761.
David Williams	1761—1770.
Joseph Bretland	1770—1772.
John Hogg	1772—1789.
Joseph Bretland	1789—1793.
Theophilus Edwards	1794—1810.

GEORGE'S MEETING.

STEPHEN TOWGOOD	1760—1777.
MICAIJAH TOWGOOD	1760—1782.
JAMES MANNING	1776—1831.
TIMOTHY KENRICK.....	1784—1804.
LANT CARPENTER, LL. D.	1805—1817.
WILLIAM HINCKS	1817—1822.
HENRY ACTON.....	1822.
JOHN CROPPER, M. A.	1832.

LEWIS STUCKLEY.—This gentleman was an Independent; but his connexion with the Exeter Dissenters requires a short account of him. He was of an ancient and honourable family in Devonshire. His brother was Sir T. Stuckley, and one of his ancestors was standard-bearer to Queen Elizabeth. It is said that, belonging to the family at one period, were thirteen manors within sight of the gate-house of the mansion at West Worlington. Mr. Stuckley preached a short time at several places before his removal to Exeter. To this city he came from Great Torrington, and began to gather a Congregational church about the year 1650. His station was the Cathedral; by conforming he might have filled a high office, but in 1662 rendered himself ineligible for all further preferment. After his ejectment, he founded the congregation in Castle Lane. Some time before his death, which occurred in 1687, he removed to Bideford, where he preached occasionally. He was indefatigable in the work of the ministry, and wrote, when near his end, a book entitled "A Gospel glass representing the miscarriages of English Protestants." He also published "Manifest Truth against Mr. Tobie Allein." *

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 364.

ROBERT ATKINS was born at Chard in 1626, and educated at Wadham College, Oxford. For some time he was one of Cromwell's chaplains; but, growing weary of the office, removed to a benefice of £300. per annum, at Coopersale, in Essex. He found this place overrun with sects, but after a while so convinced and gained them as not to have one Dissenter left in his parish. His health obliging him to remove, he was invited by Mr. Ford, of the Cathedral, to Exeter, and preached at St. Sidwell's while the choir was preparing for him. When it was finished, he had a vast auditory; he was generally esteemed one of the best preachers in the West of England.

Mr. Atkins was expelled from the Cathedral in 1660, in consequence of some disagreement with the choir. He deemed it of more importance that the thousands who sought to hear a sermon should be gratified, than that the singing service should be kept up in its ancient splendour and glory. The choristers and other powers that were thought differently; and Mr. Atkins therefore removed to St. John's Church, where he officiated till the Bartholomew Day. He then preached in private as opportunity offered, and was several times apprehended; on one occasion he was committed, but on another the mayor and justices could not, by promises or threats, get any of the multitude who gathered about his house to take him to prison.

The majority of the chamber were, however, generally tolerant towards him. Although an upright man, his manners were conciliatory, and his principles moderate and loyal. He enjoyed the friendship of two successive bishops; and some of the magistrates who were severe against other Dissenting ministers, favoured him. It is reported that he once proved, by 1 Cor. iv. 15, that those ministers who beget converts to Christ, may be justly entitled *Fathers in God*. This feat may have tended to recommend him to the Bishops. In his farewell sermon at St. John's, which was transcribed for his friends, he thus defends his brethren from the charge of disloyalty: "We will do any thing for his Majesty but sin. We will hazard any thing for

him but our souls. We hope we could die for him; only we dare not be damned for him. We make no question, however we shall be accounted of here, we shall be found loyal and obedient subjects at our appearance before God's tribunal."

Mr. Atkins died in 1685, aged 59. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Trosse.*

JOSEPH HALLET was a native of Bridport. He had no University education, but, by his own industry, acquired considerable learning. He was an accomplished critic in the Hebrew and Greek languages, and an excellent divine. At the time of the civil wars, he was minister at Hinton St. George, in Somersetshire. The following certificate of his ordination indicates the custom of the times:

Inasmuch as Mr. Joseph Hallet, student in Divinity, hath addressed himself to the Classical Presbytery of Sarum, within the province of the County of Wilts, according to the form of Church government established by authority of Parliament of August 29, 1648, for the ordination of ministers by Classical Presbytere, desiringe to be ordained a preaching Presbyter, for that he is called to the work of the ministry in the parish church of Hinton St. George, in the County of Somerset; and hath exhibited to the Presbytery sufficient testimonial (now remaining in their custody) of his competent age, of his proficiency in his studies, and of his faire and direct calling to the forementioned charge in the county aforesaid, by an order from the Committee of the said county; we, the Ministers of the said Presbytery, have (by appointment thereof) examined him according to the sense of the said form of Church government, and finding him to be duely qualified and gifted for that holy office and employment, (no just exception being made against his ordination or admission,) we have approved him; and accordingly in the parish church of St. Thomas in Sarum, upon the day and yeare hereafter expressed, we have proceeded solemnly to set him apart to the office of a preaching Presbyter and work of the ministry, with fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands, and do hereby (as far as concerneth us) actually admit him to the said

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. ii. p. 365.

charge, there to perform all the offices and duties of a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ. In witness whereof we have hereto subscribed our hands this twenty eighth of October, Anno Dom. 1652.

PHILIP PYNCKNEY. JOHN CONANT.
JOHN STRICKLAND.
NATH. GILES.
JO. WATTS.
MATTHEW HURD.*

Mr. Hallet removed from Hinton to Chisleborough. On his ejectment he retired to Bridport, and lived a short time in the house of his wife's father. Here he made himself useful to several Nonconformist societies; after his removal to a house of his own, he preached several years at Bradpole, a parish in the neighbourhood. He was invited to Exeter about the year 1672, and continued there till his death in 1688.

Mr. Hallet was twice in the Southgate Prison for his Nonconformity. His confinement shattered his constitution, and brought upon him hypochondriacal affections, which sometimes deprived him of his reason. But he was spared to be very useful among his people, and was generally considered a diligent student, a faithful and affectionate pastor, and a clear, fervent, and impressive preacher. The last subject on which he preached was Deut. xxxii. 1, the beginning of the song of Moses, and his discourse contained many passages peculiarly appropriate to his own case.

He published several sermons on "Christ's Ascension into Heaven," and "Twenty-seven Queries to the Quakers." Mr. Trosse preached his funeral sermon.

GEORGE TROSSE succeeded the subject of the last memoir. His life presented a strange contrast of complete depravity and exalted virtue. The following outline is taken from an account

* English Presbyterian.

written by himself, and a sermon preached by his colleague (Mr. Joseph Hallet, Jun.) on his death.*

He says of himself,—"I was born in Exon, Oct. 25th, in the year 1631, of Wealthy Parents, honourable Citizens. My Father was by Profession a Counsellour, and my mother the daughter of one who had twice been Chief Magistrate of the City. They gave me the usual Education of those Days amongst such as were no Friends to Puritans; They were averse to the Placing me with such, either to be bred up in Religion or Learning."

His youth, from a very early period to the age of fifteen, was spent at the Grammar School. He had a quick apprehension, and made greater progress in learning than most of his school-fellows:

"But this course of life (he continues) did not so well please me, nor the Devil as I may well suppose. For, having a roving fancy, a Desire to get Riches, and to live luxuriously in the World, I was bent upon Merchandize and travelling into Foreign Parts. But then in this I had no other motive, but the Satisfying the Great Lords and Commanders of the unregenerate world, the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life."

When he left school, he was in practice an Atheist, and professedly an intense enemy to Puritans. He kept vain company, played much at cards, scoffed at godliness, and was a welcome companion to the profane.

"Then he resided awhile (says Mr. Hallet) at Morlaix, in France, where he was more extravagantly wicked and vitious than he had been before. A while after he fixed at London, and there he was still the same person; spending his time mostly in Taverns, Gaming and Drinking to Excess. In this sensual Course of Life he continued for some considerable time; till at length God convulsed his mind,

* The Life of the Reverend Mr. Geo. Trosse, Late Minister of the Gospel in the City of Exon, Written by Himself, and Published according to his Order. To which is added, the Sermon preached at his funeral by J. H. Exon. 1714.

awaked him out of his Stupidity, and made him, in some measure, sensible of his great Wickedness."

It appears that from London he went abroad again, and spent some time at Oporto. On returning to his native city, where he lived in his mother's house, his perpetual intemperance and other vices led to a loss of reason. Three times he was confined in a state of outrageous madness, and on two occasions sent to the house of an eminent physician at Glastonbury, by whose instrumentality he was restored. During these dreadful inflictions, he fancied he saw sights and heard sounds which reproved him for his evil courses, and summoned him to engage in the work of repentance and reformation. He often relapsed into his bad habits; but at length it pleased God to make a permanent impression upon him. When he was about twenty-six years of age, he accompanied one of his cousins to Oxford; there he met with a reformed acquaintance, who had commenced a studious life and who prevailed upon him to follow his example. He was entered a Gentleman Commoner in Pembroke College, and spent some years in diligent study, reading many volumes of Latin authors, especially Divines, such as Zanchy, Camero, Paraus, &c., and Greek historians, as Thucydides, Herodotus, &c. He had a master to teach him the elements of Hebrew, and eventually he read his Hebrew Bible through several times. Nor did Mr. Trosse remain unskilled in "Rhetorique, Logick, Physicks, Ethicks, and Systemes of Divinity." All this he mentioned not to boast of his learning, but to magnify God's goodness in so wonderfully composing his head.

The picture he draws of Oxford as a place of Christian teaching, about the year 1660, is now somewhat curious. He blesses God for the means of religious improvement he possessed in the University. He records his attendance at Dr. Conant's Lecture on Fridays, Dr. Harriss's Catechetical Lecture on Tuesdays, and the Lecture of the Canons of Christ Church on Thursdays.

"Then (he adds) Religion was in its Glory in the University, and was a Qualification for Respect and Advancement. Most of our Halls and Colleges had Religious Governours; so had ours, who was Dr. Langley, a person greatly favouring and encouraging such as lived in the fear of God. He frequently administered the Lord's Supper to a select number of Collegiates. In our College-Hall, every Lord's day, in the evening, before Supper, we had a Repetition of Sermons and Solemn Prayer, by the Vice President or some one or other of the Fellows. Besides which, after supper, all Collegiate Duties having been dispatched, three or four hopeful, religious lads came to my Chamber; and with them I was wont to repeat and pray. But when King Charles II. came in, and a change was made in the University, and our Doctor turned out, all Repetitions in the Hall were put down, and my private one in my chamber could not be endured, neither could these few young men be permitted to come near me. A *Reformation* this which did not well deserve the name."

A combination of circumstances brought Mr. Trosse into the ranks of the Nonconformists. He was not a little disgusted at seeing the pious and learned Master of his College expected to make room for a man who was chiefly famed for being *a great Racer!** The chaplain of Pembroke "had an excellent Gift of Prayer;" and having prayed one Lord's day morning "with the most proper language and Heavenly matter, and with more than ordinary Elevation of Soul," this new Master, the great Racer, violently reproached him for not using the Common Prayer Book, and soon afterwards discharged him from his office. The

* It appears, from a recent exhibition at Oxford, that the taste for field-sports still prevails among her sons to a far greater degree than a love of liberality. During the present month (October, 1835) her Majesty, Queen Adelaide, has paid a visit to this celebrated seat of learning. The students and other members of the University, while waiting for her Majesty's arrival, employed themselves, as is customary on such occasions, in shouting the names of the most prominent public characters, and either cheering or hissing with great vehemence. In this instance, some young aspirant for fame shouted, "Lord Radnor and his fox-hounds," and *great were the expressions of joy*. Soon afterwards, another, recollecting his Lordship's effort to abolish Subscription to Articles of Faith, exclaimed, "Lord Radnor and the Dissenters," and there was immediately *a loud and universal hiss!*

subject of this memoir thought it necessary, about this time, to study the Controversy, and thus states the course he adopted:

"I sought God by constant Prayer for his Direction in this important case. I also apply'd myself to the Reading and Studying of Books Pro and Con. And after my most serious Perusal of Mr. Hooker's Ecclesiastical Policie, Mr. Sprint and Burgess for the Ceremonies and Conformity, and Mr. Galespie, Mr. Paul Bayn, and Mr. Ames, against these things; upon the most mature deliberation and serious weighing of matters, I concluded it was the safest way not to conform." .....
"I was satisfyd that by my Dissent I should disgust my mother and all my near relations, who were perfectly prejudiced against Presbytery and Nonconformity, and thoroughly devoted to the Episcopal Way and Interest. But notwithstanding all discouragements of this kind, I kept my resolution of being a Minister and preaching the Word."

Mr. Trosse was soon afterwards ordained in Somersetshire, with two others, by five or six able and pious Nonconformist divines. These ministers heard the theses of the young men, examined them strictly in some difficult points in divinity, received their confessions of faith, and then proceeded to ordain them. The subject of this memoir immediately began his ministry at Exeter, amidst violent persecutions. For twenty years, he preached once a week, and administered the Lord's Supper once a month, in private houses. Some account of the events that befel him during this period is given in the preceding history. When Mr. Trosse and his brethren were released from prison, they were carried to the Guildhall, in company with rogues and felons, to be accused not only of having had a Conventicle, which subjected them to a fine of forty pounds, but also for having created a riot. By means of the latter accusation, which was notoriously false, the magistrates hoped to have wrested from their victims some hundreds of pounds. Long and harassing were the trials on this infamous charge; they were adjourned from place to place, and from time to time, until the accession of William the Third put the matter at rest.

About this time Mr. Trosse succeeded Mr. Hallet, Sen., as the stated and public minister of a large congregation. For many years he continued to labour among his people, with great

reputation and usefulness. His character, both as a minister and a private individual, during this period, is described in the highest terms by Mr. Hallet, in his funeral sermon, and Mr. Gilling, in a continuation of his life. He seems to have considered himself peculiarly bound to practise self-denial, and engage in exercises of piety, in consequence of his great wickedness in early life. Hence we read of his large gifts to the poor, his prayers seven times every day for many years, and his secret fasts once a month, which lasted from five o'clock in the morning until six in the evening, when he only came down to pray in his family. The particulars of his former course being well known in Exeter, and the energy with which he subsequently denounced all kinds of vice and oppression being, to some, very disagreeable, he had to endure many taunts, and not a few cruel and groundless aspersions. From the latter he defended himself in various publications, and by a consistent and truly Christian example. He lived to the age of eighty-one, and preached to his congregation on the very day of his death. While returning from the meeting-house he fainted in the street. As soon as he was revived, he conversed with the friends who surrounded him concerning his hopes of future blessedness. When he had reached his house, he placed himself in a praying posture, called upon the name of the Lord, and thus yielded up his spirit. He chose the following words as the text of his funeral sermon: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

Mr. JAMES PEIRCE was born in London, about the year 1673. His parents belonged to the Dissenting church at Stepney, of which the celebrated Mr. Matthew Mead was then pastor: their circumstances in life were easy, and they maintained a good character "for sobriety and works of charity."

Having lost these relatives when he was not more than eight years of age, the subject of this memoir, together with a brother

and sister, were committed to the care of Mr. Mead. How his brother and sister were afterwards disposed of, is uncertain; but James was taken into the family of his guardian, and instructed by the tutors he had chosen for his own sons, one of whom was subsequently the eminent Dr. Mead. For some years he went to a grammar-school; and when he had attained a proper age, was removed to the University of Utrecht, where he had the advantage of attending the lectures of Witsius, Leydecker, Græve, and other celebrated professors. Here, too, he became acquainted with the learned Reland, with whom he afterwards maintained an agreeable correspondence and friendship. After spending some years at Utrecht, he removed to Leyden, with a view to attend the lectures of Perizonius, Spanheim, Noodt, and other learned men. At Leyden he found several Englishmen of rank and fortune, also receiving their education; this circumstance not only animated him to pursue his studies with diligence, but enabled him to commence several valuable friendships.*

When Mr. Peirce had continued upwards of five years in these seats of learning and virtue, he went back to England, and remained some time among his relations in London, whence he removed to Oxford, for the purpose of examining the Bodleian library. Returning to London, he preached occasionally at the evening lectures in Miles' Lane; and about two years afterwards he accepted the pastoral charge of a congregation of Dissenters at Cambridge; having previously received ordination from the hands of the Rev. Messrs. Sylvester, Woodhouse, Shower, and Christopher Taylor. In this new and difficult situation he was highly respected by his people, who made him what he terms "a handsome allowance;" and by every other means in their power contributed to make his settlement among them agreeable. The duration of his ministry at Cambridge is uncertain. When he received the invitation from Exeter, he had been some time minister of the Presbyterian congregation at Newbury. Prior to this event, his character as a scholar and

* P. D. M., Vol. ii. p. 442.

a genuine Nonconformist had been established by his vindication of the Dissenters in reply to Dr. Nichol.*

The history of Mr. Peirce's opinions may be best given in his own words:

"I was bred up in a scheme of which I can now make nothing but *Sabellianism*; and a set of unscriptural expressions had been inculcated upon me from my youth, which I had a great veneration for. However, having this principle as early and as deeply fasten'd in my own mind, that *the Scriptures were the only rule of our faith*, I always paid the highest regard to them; and I find a satisfaction in observing how careful I was, in the main, to use their language in my preaching. And though I cannot justify all I meet with in my old sermons, yet it pleases me to observe that, the older I grew, the more careful I became to express myself in these matters in the words of Scripture. I look'd upon this doctrine as a mystery which it was to little purpose to search into, and, despairing of satisfaction with reference to the difficulties I perceived, I negligently contented myself with patching together some places of Scripture, which I thought yielded the main assertions I held.

"But while I studiously avoided the controversy, and read my Bible under the influence of a prejudice in favour of the common opinion, two things used very much to astonish me. One was, that I saw plainly the ante-Nicene writers never came up to my notion, nay frequently spake very contrary thereto. I was at a loss how to reconcile the supposed necessity of my belief with the charity which I thought due to them. But here I help'd myself with this fancy,—that the doctrine was not then so well clear'd as it was afterwards; and therefore great allowances were to be made to those writers. The other thing which sometimes surpris'd me was, that I observ'd the writers after the Council of Nice, and particularly St. Basil, appear'd to have had odd notions of the Trinity, as that the three persons had one common nature, just as three men have. This seem'd to me downright Tritheism; and I wonder'd how he came to be counted orthodox. But these things I reputed peculiarities, and thought I avoided them by the fewness of the assertions I would venture to advance. And observing how very differently men used to speak and think of this subject, I became more and more averse to the thinking or speaking of

* Western Inquisition, p. 5.

it, and avoided reading about it, except as it came in my way, when I was reading with quite another view.

"When the noise was first raised about Mr. Whiston, I was much troubled, having an high esteem of him as a learned and pious man, who had honour'd me with his acquaintance while I lived in Cambridge, and with a correspondence after I was removed. I took, therefore, the liberty to write him a letter, wherein in a friendly manner I expostulated with him, and produc'd some arguments for my opinion, and against what was reported to be his. His answer waved all manner of argument, and referred me to his papers which he intended to print, as soon as they had been examined by some learned men into whose hands he design'd to put them; and in the mean while he referred me to *Novatian de Trinitate*, to see his notions and those of the ancient writers together."

"At length Dr. Clarke publish'd his Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity, and I, continuing as backward as ever to puzzle myself with controversy, would not so much as read him. But the talk of these matters very much increasing after men had read his book, I accidently met a friend who reproach'd me with my sloth, and my unfairness in not reading both sides of so important a controversy; and thereupon I bought the Doctor's book, and Mr. Whiston's five volumes, resolving to inquire as throughly as I could into the matter, and then to write somewhat in defence of my opinion, but with the greatest caution. This I believe might be near a twelvemonth after the Doctor's book was publish'd."

"I was soon convinc'd the common opinion could not reasonably be esteem'd a fundamental article of the Christian faith, as I had been too apt before to take it to be. And upon serious consideration the subject seem'd to me so abstruse and difficult, that I could not imagine God had made men's salvation to depend upon their entertaining exactly the same notion concerning it; especially seeing the Scripture never insists upon the absolute necessity of one uniform belief about it. And I was much confirmed in this apprehension, by considering how widely good men had differ'd from one another upon the subject.

"While I continued in suspence, being still upon the search, I consider'd with my self, how I ought to order my practice. And here I thought it most safe for me to keep close to the Scripture, which is much clearer in delivering rules and examples for our practice, than in furnishing us with nice and intricate speculations As to the Christian virtues, I apprehended them not much concerned in the contro-

versy; and in conversation I had always avoided such intricate points, and might easily do so still. But my chief concern was about my preaching and praying. Concerning the former, I was resolved to keep more close to the scripture expression than ever, and venture to say very little in my own words of a matter about which I was in so much doubt my self. As to the latter, I could not find there was any occasion for my making much alteration, which ever notion should appear to be the truth; having always accustom'd myself, as all Christians for the most part do, to pray to the Father, thro' the Son, by the Holy Spirit. In this therefore I resolved to go on. The only doubt I had, was about the expediency and agreeableness of the doxology I often used at the end of my prayers. I could not say it was unlawful; but I thought the safest way was to consider what sort of doxologies the Scriptures set before us, and so recommend to our use. These I was sure must be safe, and the other might be doubtful. And it seem'd to me very reasonable that he that prays with others, should make the worship as unexceptionable as possible to all Christians, by avoiding to bring into it disputable, doubtful, and unnecessary things. For this reason I left off the doxologies I had been wont to use."

Mr. Peirce was in this state of mind when he was invited to Exeter. A few additional particulars may be taken from the memoir by his satirical contemporary, Mr. John Fox.* This gentleman did not hesitate to record very unequivocally the failings of his friends; and as the most important purpose of biography cannot be accomplished without fidelity, I shall venture to give the greater part of Mr. Fox's narrative *verbatim*.

"The occasion of his coming to Exeter was to succeed the old Mr. Trosse. He was settled at Newbury with a very encouraging congregation when he had the invitation, and it was not soon or easily, to appearance at least, he complied with it. He saw that great court was paid to him, and very well knew how to keep up his dignity; accordingly, he first of all seemed to scruple the leaving of his old people, who were all in tears about losing him, on which account both London and West-country ministers were consulted, who were of opinion at last, that it might be for the glory of God and the interest of the Dissenters for him to move to Exeter. When this obstacle was

* Mon. Rep., O. S., Vol. xvi. p. 329.

removed, another came in view, which was, how far it might be consistent with his health to come into Devonshire. To make all easy, an eminent physician in London was consulted, who, after duly weighing the case, advised, that removing to Exeter could not prejudice that, and thus at last the eager desires of the Exonians were gratified. An extraordinary respect was paid him at and long after his first coming. He was looked upon as the first man of the party, and *he* was reputed a happy man who was admitted to the conversation and acquaintance of Mr. Peirce. This was as distasteful to some ministers as it was agreeable to him, and laid the foundation for that party which was afterwards formed against him, though it was pretended that they acted purely from a zeal for truth, and the fundamentals of religion. He was, without doubt, a man of great parts and learning, and as such, made a greater figure among the Dissenters than any among them for many years before him; and then he was always very indefatigable in his studies, and was so made, that his whole mind and thoughts and conversation were engaged in them. I have often heard him say, that a thought would sometimes come into his head by night which pleased him, and that he then constantly struck a light, and went to his study to write it down; and that when he was writing against Dr. Nichol, his usual custom was to go into his study when the bell rung nine in Cambridge (for there he lived at that time), where he always sat till four or five next morning, and never thought the time long."

"He was exceedingly well versed in the learned languages, but especially in the Latin, which appears by his *Vindiciæ*, &c., though I have been credibly told that it was corrected very accurately by the then Master of Westminster School, who was looked upon as a very great critic in that tongue. He was a very good philosopher and mathematician, but what he chiefly bent his studies to was divinity and explaining the Scriptures. He has given a specimen of his talent this way, in a Commentary on some of St. Paul's Epistles, after the manner of Mr. Locke. I never thought him a fine preacher; for his common discourses were loose and unstudied, and he had a sort of cant in delivering them which pleased his hearers, because it chiefly affected the passions, and because he talked a great deal without notes. In his prayers he was often very jejune and dry, unless he happened to fall into a particular strain of thoughts which touched him, and then he would proceed with great elevation, without cant, tautology, or nonsense."

Here Mr. Fox notices his contemporary's love of power in the Assembly, and then proceeds with the following description:

"He conversed where he was acquainted with very great freedom, and when he was well he liked to be jocose and entertaining; for he told a story with great humour, and would laugh immoderately when any thing hit him, whether told by another or by himself. He was quite a gentleman in his behaviour, and understood and practised good manners, and he knew how to behave himself to people of all ranks and parties without discovering any of that unpolite shyness, or mean sheepishness, with which most of his corps are infected for want of knowing and conversing with people better than themselves. He lived in his family with great decorum, if he was not sometimes a little too severe in executing his authority, for I know he hath condescended to the discipline of the horsewhip on some occasions. He was not over generous, or much given to hospitality; he had very seldom his friends to eat or drink; and though he would make free for several days together, and has been entertained with the best of all sorts, he has hardly invited that friend who entertained him to a single meal when he has next seen him. His love of money appeared at the time of the monstrous rise of the South Sea Stock; for he would not sell at 500 or 600 advance, and staid so long till it fell and missed his market. He had some peculiarities. He never could be persuaded to sit for his picture, for he had a notion that pictures originally were the occasion of worshiping images. There was a creature to which he had a natural aversion, but he would never tell what that creature was, even to his own wife. He would not attend the marriage of his own daughter, because he had written against the ring in marriage. He was always close and secret about his own affairs, and, what is seldom, very incurious about the affairs of others. He used no manner of diversion nor any exercise, until the swelling of his legs and other disorders obliged him to it. And indeed he was one of those people who are never happy but when they are deeply engaged in thought, or in conversation which suits their way and manner of thinking. He had some very great acquaintances, particularly Lord Chancellor King and Dr. Clarke, and was really known and esteemed more by the world than any man of his character for a century before; and this was the occasion of his disgrace and trouble in the latter part of his life.

"I don't think he behaved under it becoming a person of his sense

and dignity. After he was ejected, he removed from the city into a retired house in the suburbs; but he retired in a very ill-humour, for he suffered his pride to get the better of his philosophy. I was once walking with him in one of his orchards, which had a prospect of St. Peter's towers: upon my taking notice of it, he surprised me with crying out, in great resentment and bitterness, 'Oh that hated city!' and it was plain to every one that was intimate with him, that he had not sufficient greatness of mind to despise his enemies, and that he suffered the triumph they gained over him in his ejection to break his heart. He did not survive his troubles many years; for though he had a handsome meeting-house built on purpose for him, with an encouraging congregation; though he got great reputation by what he wrote in the controversy then on foot, and though he was handsomely provided for in the world; yet his constant vexation, added to his retired way of life, threw him into a bad habit, which impoverished his blood so much, that a vessel broke in his lungs, which discharged so largely that he died in two or three days. He was sensible of his danger when first his disorder appeared, and he told Mrs. Peirce, who happened to be near him in his kitchen, where he was sitting, that he always thought a time would come when they must part. He spoke this with a firmness and composure which struck all who heard him. And one night he asked his apothecary, who watched with him, what he thought of his case, who making him an answer which implied he was fearful of telling the truth, he said, 'Pray let me know the worst, for I am not afraid to die.' He then said he doubted he had not long to live, upon which he answered, 'I am satisfied; and go tell my enemies that I die in peace; that I have true comfort in the part I have acted, and for which I have suffered, and that I hope one day to see my Saviour's face with joy, when some of them may hang their heads and tremble.' He uttered this (as the gentleman declared) with an astonishing greatness, and all his behaviour in his last scene of life was becoming a good and a great man."

Notwithstanding part of Mr. Fox's description, some of my readers will be disposed to say, that *many* of the scenes of Mr. Peirce's life were becoming a good and a great man. With regard to the failings mentioned in the above extracts, I cannot satisfy myself without offering a few remarks. First, Mr. Fox had an evident tendency to be severe. And next, for the failings Mr. Peirce really possessed, many allowances are to be

made: he was a man of studious habits; the provocations he received were very great; he felt himself, and he had a right to feel himself, far superior, in many respects, to his opponents. But the reader will say,—still he had faults. Unquestionably he had. Let those, however, who would blame Mr. Peirce employ themselves rather in examining their own characters. Let each ask himself—if all my own failings were so unsparingly recorded, what would posterity think of *me?* Biography, by representing human nature as it is, leads us to do all in our power to make it what it ought to be.

"He was buried (says the writer in the Protestant Dissenters' Magazine) in the churchyard of St. Leonard's, Exon; and his surviving relations, in testimony of their affectionate regard, were desirous to have a stone with a proper inscription placed over him, and applied to a friend in London for this purpose, who sent them a very elegant Latin inscription. No one concerned in the affair supposed it was necessary to ask the consent of the minister of the parish, to place the stone over the grave. However, when the work was nearly finished, the rector informed them that he had a right to inquire after, and a power to forbid, such inscriptions as he disapproved; and upon inspecting that intended for Mr. Peirce, he refused to allow it to be placed in the churchyard. He was then requested to permit the following words to be inscribed: '*Here lies the rev., learned, and pious Mr. James Peirce.*' But the rev. rector would not consent, alleging that Mr. Peirce could not be styled rev., because he was not lawfully ordained; nor *pious*, because he taught *errors*. All, therefore, which was permitted to be inscribed upon the tomb was,

"'MR. JAMES PEIRCE'S TOMB. 1726.'"

A list of Mr. Peirce's works, twenty-four in number, was inserted at the conclusion of the memoir in the Protestant Dissenters' Magazine. They chiefly relate to the celebrated Exeter Controversy, and to the discussion between the Dissenters and the Church of England.

The following is the inscription objected to by the rector:

H. S. E.
IACOBVS PEIRCIVS,
CLARI NOMINIS THEOLOGVS,
QVI INGENIO PERSPICACI LIMATOQUE IVDICIO
TANTAM ERVDITIONEM FELICITER CONIVNXIT
VT VTRVM EXIMIIS NATVRÆ DOTIBVS
AN INDVSTRIÆ ORNAMENTIS MAGIS CONSPICVVS ESSET
IN DVBIO RELIQVISSE VIDEATVR.
IVVENIS STVDIORVM CAVSA VLTRAIECTVM SE CONTVLIT
VNDE POST QVINQVENNIVM DOMVM REVERSVS
INDEFESSO LABORE ATQVE DILIGENTIA
OMNI FERE LITERARVM, GENERE MENTEM IMPLEVIT
QVO AD THEOLOGIÆ COGNITIONEM SVBSIDII ALIQVID
SIBI COMPARARE POSSET
TANTA IGITVR OPTIMARVM ARTIVM SCIENTIA INSTRVCTVS
CVNCTAS SACRI MVNERIS PARTES FIDELISSIME PRAESTITIT
TAM ACCVRATIS CONCIONIBVS QVAM SCRIPTIS ERVDITIS
PLVRIMVM CELEBRATVS
VERITATIS AVTEM EXQVIRENDAE SEMPER STVDIOSISSIMVS
CVM IN NONNVLLIS TANDEM ACCIDIT VT SENTENTIAM MVTARET
PARI PRVDENTIA ET INTEGRITATE SE GESSIT
NAM VT ALIOS EA CELARE SEDVLO CVRAVIT
DVM ILLORVM INTERESSE VT SCIRENT HAVD CREDIDIT
SIC CVM PRIMVM VVLGARE NECESSARIVM IVDICAVIT
NVLLO SVO COMMODO AVT INCOMMODO ADDVCI POTVIT
QVO MINVS PVBLICE PROFITERETVR,
HINC IN QVORVNDAM OFFENSIONEM FORTE INCIDENS
QVIBVSCVM ANTEA CONCORDITER VIXERAT
CVM RELIQVAM VITAE PARTEM IAM MAGIS PRIVATAM
SIBI VERO HAVD MINVS LABORIOSAM
NEQVE ALIIS MINVS VTILEM TRANSIGERE STATVERAT
SACRIS LITERIS EXPLICANDIS SE PRAECIPVE ADDIXIT
CVI PRAECLARO OPERI CVM QVATVOR ANNOS IMPENDERAT
PARTIBVS QVIBVSDAM EDITISQVAE INGENII
ET DOCTRINAE PERPETVA ERVNT MONVMENTA
LETHALI MORBO CORREPTVS PIE PLACIDE QVE DECESSIT
III KAL. APRILIS A. D. M. DCC. XXVI.
AETATIS SVAE LIII.

In English :—

HERE LIES
JAMES PEIRCE,
AN EMINENT DIVINE
WHOSE GREAT LEARNING, HAPPILY JOINED
WITH A PENETRATING GENIUS AND SOLID JUDGMENT,
SEEM TO HAVE LEFT IT DOUBTFUL WHETHER HIS EXCELLENT
ENDOWMENTS OF NATURE OR ACQUIRED ABILITIES RENDERED
HIM MORE CONSPICUOUS.
HE WAS EDUCATED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF UTRECHT,
FROM WHENCE RETURNING HOME AFTER FIVE YEARS,
BY INDEFATIGABLE LABOUR AND DILIGENCE
HE FURNISHED HIS MIND WITH MOST PARTS OF LITERATURE
THAT MIGHT BE OF SERVICE TO HIM IN THE STUDY
OF DIVINITY;
AND HAVING GAINED SO GREAT A KNOWLEDGE OF THE BEST
ARTS, HE VERY FAITHFULLY DISCHARGED ALL THE PARTS
OF HIS SACRED OFFICE, AND WAS EQUALLY CELBRATED
FOR HIS ACCURATE DISCOURSES IN THE PULPIT
AND HIS LEARNED WRITINGS;
BUT BEING ALWAYS A MOST DILIGENT INQUIRER AFTER TRUTH,
HAPPENING IN SOME THINGS TO CHANGE HIS OPINION, HE
ACTED WITH EQUAL PRUDENCE AND INTEGRITY, FOR, AS
HE CAREFULLY CONCEALED HIS SENTIMENTS FROM
OTHERS, WHILE HE THOUGHT IT WAS NOT THEIR
CONCERN TO KNOW THEM;
SO WHEN HE JUDGED THE DISCOVERY OF THEM NECESSARY,
NO VIEWS OF ADVANTAGE OR DISADVANTAGE COULD PREVAIL
WITH HIM NOT TO PROFESS THEM PUBLICLY.
BY THIS MEANS FALLING UNDER THE DISPLEASURE OF SOME
WITH WHOM HE HAD BEFORE LIVED IN FRIENDSHIP,
DESIGNING NOW TO SPEND THE REMAINDER OF HIS LIFE MORE
PRIVATELY, THOUGH NOT WITH LESS LABOUR TO HIMSELF
NOR BENEFIT TO OTHERS,
HE APPLIED HIMSELF CHIEFLY TO EXPLAIN THE SACRED SCRIP-
TURES, IN WHICH EXCELLENT WORK HAVING SPENT FOUR
YEARS AND PUBLISHED SOME PARTS OF IT,
WHICH WILL BE PERPETUAL MONUMENTS OF HIS ABILITIES AND
LEARNING, BEING SEIZED WITH A FATAL DISTEMPER HE
PIOUSLY AND CALMLY EXPIRED,
ON THE XXX OF MARCH, M. DCC. XXVI.
IN THE LIII YEAR OF HIS AGE.

MICAIJAH TOWGOOD was born at Axminster, in the year 1700. He was the grandson of Matthew Towgood, an ejected minister. This gentleman had two sons; the elder was a minister, and the father of Stephen Towgood; the younger was a physician, and the father of Micaijah. The subject of this sketch received his education in the house of his father till he was sent to the academy of Mr. Chadwick, which was in great repute among the Dissenters in the West of England. He remained here till Lady-day, 1717, when he was removed, together with his school-fellow Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Amory, to Taunton, and placed under the care of the Rev. Stephen James and the Rev. Henry Grove, who superintended an academical institution in that town. In 1772, he succeeded Mr. Sparke as pastor of the Presbyterian congregation at Moreton-Hampstead, and laboured assiduously and successfully, in this corner of the vineyard, fourteen years. During his residence here, he married Miss Hawker, daughter of James Hawker, Esq., of Luppit, Devon, by whom he had four children, only one of whom survived him. Towards the end of the year 1736, prospects of more extensive usefulness opened to him by an invitation to settle at Crediton; his congregation, with the hope of retaining him, offered to raise his salary, but he was influenced by higher motives; and in the beginning of 1737, he entered upon his new charge. Here he pursued the course which had rendered his ministry so useful at Moreton. In this year, he first appeared before the public as the advocate of religious liberty.

The title of the pamphlet which he then published, is "High-flown Episcopal and Priestly Claims Examined"; its object is to asert the sufficiency of Scripture as a rule of faith and practice, without creeds, articles, and ceremonies, and the right of every man to interpret it for himself. In 1739, he published "The Dissenters' Apology," a vindication of the Dissenters from some charges brought against them in the posthumous sermons of Dr. Warren, and an examination of schism, church authority, and civil establishments of religion. About the same

time appeared three letters of his, signed "Paulus," in a periodical work called The Old Whig, on the order for reading the ridiculous stories of Tobit, and Bell, and the Dragon, and on the services of Confirmation and Absolution. His next publication was a pamphlet entitled "Spanish Cruelty and Injustice, a justifiable Plea for a vigorous war with Spain, and a rational ground for hope of success." This was followed by a tract on "Recovery from Sickness," which passed through three editions, and was reprinted in America. During the rebellion of 1745, Mr. T. gave to the public a Sermon on the Errors, Absurdities, and Iniquities of Popery; and Bishop Burnet and Bishop Lloyd's Account of the Pretender's birth. The same year appeared, "The Dissenting Gentleman's Letters in answer to Mr. White," a work which shews the author to have been one of the ablest advocates of religious liberty. Whoever wishes to know the true grounds upon which true Dissenters justify their separation from the Church of England, should consult this admirable work. Mr. T. next published, "An Essay on the Character of Charles I." In the appendix to this work, he brings forward the testimony of Burnet, Echard, Clarendon, Rapin, and Hume, to prove that the Presbyterian clergy were the only body of men in the kingdom that had the courage to oppose and protest against the trial and condemnation of the King, and to petition for his life after it had been condemned; and that they had the principal hand in restoring his son. This only shews, what we have too many reasons for believing, that the Presbyterians of that period had very contracted notions of liberty, and often acted in the passive-obedient spirit of the ancient poet—

"Though kings forget to govern as they ought,
Yet subjects must obey as they are bound." *

The next event in Mr. Towgood's life was his removal to Exeter, in 1749. He now published two pamphlets—"The Baptism of Infants a reasonable service," and "Dipping not

* The Earl of Dorset, in his tragedy of Gosboduc, first acted in 1561.

the only Scriptural and Primitive Mode of Baptizing." In 1753, he was the means of defeating an attempt to make subscription to the doctrine of the Trinity a condition of receiving ordination from the Exeter Assembly. In 1756, a Charge by the Bishop of Oxford to his Clergy, led him to publish "Serious and Free Thoughts on the Present State of the Church and Religion." In this spirited pamphlet, he reminds the Bishop that among the causes assigned by his lordship for the prevalence of scepticism, he had forgotten to mention that the clergy themselves solemnly subscribe to articles they do not believe. Two years afterwards, the taking of Cape Breton furnished our author with a subject for a sermon, which he also printed.

When it was proposed to establish an academical institution at Exeter, the necessity of securing the co-operation of Mr. Towgood was immediately seen. The plan was carried into effect in 1760, and he undertook to deliver to the students critical lectures on the Scriptures. This he continued to perform till the breaking up of the establishment in 1768. He also performed all his pastoral duties till 1782, when he resigned his charge, having laboured in the ministry more than three-score years. On his retirement, an affectionate and respectful address, accompanied by a handsome silver vase—with an appropriate inscription—was presented to him by the united congregations. He was, at the same time, requested to allow some of his discourses to be published at their expense. This request was not complied with, probably, from a fear that at his advanced age he should not be able to bestow the requisite labour on the revision of his MSS. He, however, published an address to the two congregations on "The Grounds of Faith in Christians," comprising a concise view of the Evidences of Christianity.

Mr. Towgood lived nine years after his pastoral connexion had ceased. He expired, at the patriarchal age of ninety-one, without pain, and in the perfect possession of his mental faculties. The description of his character will be best given in the words of Mr. Manning;—

"It was not only his abilities and eloquence as a preacher which secured him the respectful attention of his audience, and the affection of his friends. These were accompanied by an amiable temper and exemplary life. His natural powers, to those who have read his works or attended his ministry, must appear to have been good, but his moral character was truly lovely. His discourses were the transcript of his soul, and his life was the enforcement of his sermons, the best comment to his preaching; and by these means he secured the respect and veneration of his hearers."

"Mr. Towgood's public services were assisted by private devotions. He never entered the pulpit without first addressing himself to God for a blessing in his retirements. Private prayer was always the first and last business of the day, and it was by these exercises he furnished himself with spirit and resolution to go through the active duties of his profession: this delightful intercourse with the Father of his spirit, gave animation and zeal to his public services, and rendered them a blessing to his flock..... In the devotions which his family and friends were called upon to share, he was equally constant and regular."

"Though Mr. Towgood was thus remarkably devout, there was nothing formal, austere, or forbidding in his manners. 'Sanctity sat so easily, so unaffectedly, so gracefully upon him, that in him we beheld the very beauty of holiness.' Strict, regular, and exemplary in his piety; he was lively, familiar, and condescending in company. Cheerfully did he mix with his family and friends in the hours of relaxation, and bore his part in conversation with all the good natured pleasantry of a virtuous heart. He possessed learning without the pedantry and pride with which it is often accompanied; and his attention to study never indisposed him to those smaller attentions by which the esteem and affection of mankind are greatly conciliated."

"Mr. Towgood had an exquisite relish for society, and was himself a most entertaining companion. His mind was furnished with an ample store of knowledge, not only in matters connected with his profession but in most of the subjects of liberal inquiry. He knew the civil and ecclesiastical history, both of ancient and modern times, with an exactness very surprising in a man so conversant in deeper studies. He was also well acquainted with the history of arts, sciences, and manufactures. Of these he had lived long enough to see many in their infancy and maturity; he could therefore trace them from their

origin, through all their various improvements, interruptions, and revolutions."

"He was much delighted with the company of his brethren in the ministry, in hearing their sentiments, and communicating his own on theological subjects, especially Scripture knowledge and inquiry. From the friendly manner in which he received them, and his extensive correspondence with them, he might justly have been called the cement of love and harmony, in the friendly associations of the two Western counties. His learning, piety, sincerity, experience, and good sense, gave him an authority and influence among his brethren, whom he always treated with affection and freedom, and from whom he always found the returns of respect and esteem. Many occasions occurred which afforded him opportunities of exerting this justly acquired influence in checking and discountenancing a divisive spirit in ministers and in congregations."

It is well known, that in his religious opinions, Mr. Towgood was an Arian, having, in early life, relinquished the generally received doctrine of the Trinity. The value which he attached to Christian freedom and intergity is shewn by his declaration, "I esteem it a greater honour to be descended from these noble confessors (the ejected ministers), than to have had a coronet or garter in the line of my ancestry." Equally characteristic of his charitable spirit are his remarks on the arrangements of Providence, with regard to differences of opinion.

"Had it been the intention of Heaven, that we should have all seen things in the same light, they would, doubtless, have been revealed with such clearness and precision, as that no sincere inquirer could possibly have mistaken them; and that no diversity of opinion amongst the followers of Christ should ever have taken place. But where then would have been the opportunity for the display of that candour and condescension, that meekness and self-conquest, that mutual forbearance, humility and charity, which are some of the brightest ornaments, and even glories of the Christian character, and which are of infinitely greater value, to recommend us to the Divine favour, than any rightness of opinion, and any orthodoxy of sentiment,

in many, which have been thought, and which really are, great doctrines of revelation."

I cannot conclude this memoir without expressing a hope that some of my readers will be induced, by the extracts I have given, to make themselves acquainted with the life of Mr. Towgood, by Mr. Manning,—"whose memory (to use the last words of this valuable piece of biography,) will ever be dear to me, and to all who, like me, have derived instruction and delight from the spirit of his writings, and the charms of his conversation."

TIMOTHY KENRICK was born, January 26th, 1759, at Wynn Hall, in the parish of Ruabon, in Denbighshire; and received his grammar learning at a private school in Wrexham. He soon discovered a predilection for the Christian ministry, as exercised among Protestant Dissenters; an office which had been sustained with eminent credit and usefulness by his paternal grandfather, the Rev. John Kenrick, of Wrexham.

In his sixteenth year, he became a pupil at Daventry, then under the care of Dr. Ashworth, and shortly afterwards of Mr. Robins. Here he pursued his studies with signal reputation and advantage; being distinguished by the excellence of his temper, the correctness of his judgment, the diligence of his application, and the extent and solidity of his attainments From the first he seems to have cultivated a habit of devotion with singular assiduity, making himself master of a rich variety of scriptural expressions for the purpose of introducing them into his prayers in the family and in public;—a practice in which he was remarked for considerable propriety of selection.

It was a proof of the high sense entertained of his acquirements and virtues that he was chosen an assistant-tutor in the academy before he had completed his own course of study, and was further appointed to read lectures, during one year, for Mr.

Robins, shortly before the resignation of that gentleman. On the election of Mr. Belsham, Mr. Kenrick continued his services, first, as classical, and next, as mathematical tutor; and by punctuality, zeal, and accuracy, united with great firmness of purpose, and a mild and happy manner of reproof, he gained, in a great degree, the attachment of his pupils. Having, however, the stated exercise of his profession still in view, he was soon called to another sphere of duty.

In the beginning of the year 1784, Mr. Kenrick was invited to succeed Mr. Towgood at Exeter. In the summer of the following year he was ordained, and upon this occasion he delivered a statement of his religious belief, which, at that time, was far from being directly opposed to the received opinion. One subject, certainly, which he afterwards viewed in a different light, was the propriety of ordination itself, as it is usually observed among Dissenters. Not that he disapproved of a religious service in order to introduce the connexion between a pastor and his flock; for in such a service he was himself to have engaged in the autumn of 1804, had not his death intervened. He was persuaded, however, that unscriptural sentiments of the positive institutions of the gospel, are considerably promoted by the custom of ministers not being permitted to celebrate baptism or the Lord's supper, previously to the ceremony denominated ordination. On quitting the academy, Mr. Kenrick was far from ceasing to be a student. Much as his proficiency surpassed his years, he still applied himself with extraordinary diligence to the acquisition of knowledge, as well as to the communication of it, and especially to that of theological knowledge. Much of his time was employed in preparing his compositions for the pulpit; much in discharging the lesser duties of the pastoral relation; and it was also his object to increase his qualifications for two highly important branches of service, the exposition of the Scriptures, and the religious instruction of the young.

He now entered on a more critical examination of the New Testament in the original language, with only the occasional

help of some of the best commentators. To this direction of his studies were owing the expository lectures on the historical books of the Christian covenant which he delivered more than once to his congregation; and to this he was indebted, under Providence, for a happy change in his sentiments of Christian doctrine. Some of the first religious impressions on his mind were accompanied by his admission of the tenets inculcated in the Assembly's Catechism. One of his favourite books in early life was Dr. Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." This treatise, with many claims on approbation, justly incurs the accusation of describing religious excellence as a certain train and state of the affections, rather than as a principle and habit. So powerful was its influence on Mr. Kenrick, that, agreeably to a direction contained in it, he drew up and subscribed a solemn act of self-dedication to a holy life. But, while he gave this proof of the devout and serious temper by which he was always characterized, his feelings were overcast by a gloom bordering on that despair which Dr. Priestley likewise experienced in his youth, and which proceeded from a similar cause. It was then the practice of Mr. Kenrick to regard God as the arbitrary sovereign of the human race, and not as their gracious Father; he was then perplexed as to the proper object of his worship, and had a constant fear of incurring the displeasure of *one* of the persons in the Trinity, by presenting his addresses to *another*. At a subsequent period, he frequently contrasted with gratitude the doubts and the despondency of his former days, with the serenity and joy arising from his subsequent belief. At the time of his removal to Exeter, his views of the Trinity were, probably, those that had been taken by Dr. S. Clarke, and his creed, in respect to other articles, approached more nearly to the doctrines of Arminius, than to those of Calvin.

In the course of his subsequent investigation, he gained a persuasion, which gradually increased in strength, that Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, is neither God equal with the Father, nor a pre-existent and superangelic being, but simply of

the human race, though highly distinguished by the Deity beyond former messengers and prophets. Hence he regarded the doctrine of the gospel as more simple indeed than he had hitherto considered it, but, at the same time, more credible and useful. On other important articles in dispute among the professors of Christianity, he also disclosed, about this period, a change in his opinions. In these pages, however, it is the less necessary to state his religious sentiments at length, as they are fully represented in two posthumous volumes of his sermons, and in his Exposition of the Historical Parts of the Christian Scriptures. To conceal or disguise his views of Divine truth from the societies whom he served was not the disposition of Mr. Kenrick. If to some persons they were obnoxious, and if they were unpopular in the eyes of others, he had not so learned Christ as to shrink, on these accounts, from avowing them. Eventually, they were embraced by many members of his flock.

At the half-yearly assembly of the Protestant Dissenting ministers of Devon and Cornwall, at Exeter, May 7, 1788, Mr. Kenrick delivered a discourse, on "the best method of communicating religious knowledge to young men," which he afterwards made public. Early in 1792, he published a sermon which had been delivered on the preceding 5th of November, and which was entitled, "The Spirit of Persecutors Exemplified; and the conduct to be observed towards their descendants." This subject and his application of it had evidently been suggested to him by those memorials of bigotry and intolerance which he had recently perceived at Birmingham. The steady and well-directed zeal of Mr. Kenrick prompted him, in the same year, to devise and attempt the establishment of an Unitarian Book Society, in the West of England, upon the plan of one which had been instituted some months before in the metropolis. Convinced of the desirableness of a provincial association for the like purposes, he exerted himself in recommending it to his friends, took an active part in framing the rules of it, drew up the simple and perspicuous statement which stands at

the head of them, and, to his death, discharged the office of its secretary with the utmost vigilance and punctuality. On the second aniversary of this institution, Sept. 3, 1793, Mr. Kenrick delivered a sermon at Taunton, which, a few months afterwards, was committed to the press, and the object of which is to shew that the period is probably arrived for the revival and diffusion of those two important truths, the unity of the Divine Being, and the humanity of Christ. Among the useful publications circulated by the Western Unitarian Society, are a volume of prayers for families, and another, of prayers for individuals: both these works were compiled by Mr. Kenrick, partly from printed forms already in existence, and partly from communications, in manuscript by himself and several of his friends. Soon after the beginning of 1795, he printed "An Address to Young Men," &c., which has been published since his death, in the first volume of his discourses.

About this time, he entertained the serious wish of again undertaking the office of a tutor. To instruct the young was an employment congenial to his mind, and his delight in it, added to his conviction of the urgent necessity of such exertions in the cause of learning and religion, now induced him to project the re-establishment of an academical institution at Exeter, principally with the view of providing for a succession of Dissenting ministers. In the summer of 1799, he opened his house for this purpose; having obtained the able co-operation of Mr. Bretland in the classical and mathematical department. Some of his students were designed for commercial and civil life; and all were under the immediate superintendence of Mr. Kenrick, in whose family most of them resided, and from whom they received lectures in logic, the theory of the human mind, and the evidences, doctrines, and history of natural and revealed religion. In general, the course of instruction and discipline pursued in this seminary resembled that which had been followed with success at Daventry. By the assistance of some of Mr. Kenrick's friends, in his immediate neighbourhood, and of others at a distance, exhibitions were given to a few students in divini-

97.; and to the same liberality he was indebted for a small, but elegant, set of philosophical instruments, and for some valuable books, in addition to the use of an excellent library, with which he was obligingly accommodated by the trustees of the former seminary at Exeter.

Considerable and various sacrifices were made by Mr. Kenrick, with a view to the effectual discharge of the duties of this relation. Nor should the obligation which he thus conferred on the friends of learning, religion, and free inquiry, be lightly estimated. Had his seminary been situated in the centre of the kingdom, it would, probably, have attracted greater attention, and been more extensively advantageous. Such, however, was the reputation of its tutors, that it obtained increasing patronage. Mr. Kenrick, who was disinterestedly concerned to provide a succession of ministers properly qualified for their work, and who wished to see others feel an interest in the support of theological students rather than of an academy, had the satisfaction to perceive the growing credit and utility of his undertaking: he witnessed with delight the improvement of his pupils; and there is reason to believe that had Providence lengthened his life, the academical institution at Exeter, humble and domestic as it was, would have rendered signal service to the cause of sacred literature and truth, liberty and virtue.

A short time before his own seminary was set on foot, Mr. Kenrick had been strongly invited to be lecturer in divinity and presiding tutor in the new College at Manchester: the situation was honourable and important; but upon mature reflection, he declined the offer of it, from a persuasion that the success of his labours, in the joint character of pastor and tutor, was on the whole more likely to be promoted by his continuance at Exeter. Many warm friends who were able to discern his worth, and eager to acknowledge it, and whose attachment to him was, in their circumstances, affectionate and respectful, he passed the residue of his days. This happy connection was also of considerable [illegible]. In the summer of 1804, he paid a visit to his friends in Shropshire, and [illegible]

as ever, and his spirits remarkably cheerful. From [illegible] excursion to Chester and Liverpool, he returned in the middle of August, to Wrexham; and during his walks, on the mountains in the fields surrounding that town, he died almost suddenly to all. Medical aid was instantly procured; but the spark of life was extinguished, beyond hope of its revival by human skill. This solemn event was probably produced by apoplexy, with which he had once been alarmingly attacked some years before. On Sunday, August 26, he was interred, among his ancestors, in the Dissenters' burial-ground, at Wrexham.

The sensation produced in his family and friends at Exeter, by the intelligence of his death, can more easily be conceived than represented. In every place, indeed, to which the information was conveyed, it excited the deepest sorrow of those who had known him; but it was natural that he should be most lamented in that city which had been the principal scene of his labours and his happiness, and where he was most respected and beloved. After a suitable interval, the congregation [illegible] their sense of the instructions of their late pastor, by requesting that Mrs. Kenrick would allow the publication of his Expositions of the New Testament, and also two volumes of his sermons. They justly considered that they could not render a better testament to his memory; and their letter, accompanying the resolution which contained this request, is highly honourable to their principles and feelings.

Mr. Kenrick's knowledge was various and well digested. With the several branches of theology he had an intimate acquaintance, which he was constantly improving. Steadiness of mind distinguished him from the bulk of the professors of Christianity, and even from many of his brethren in the ministry, in his ardent love of religious truth. To discover and communicate the pure doctrines of the gospel, and to [illegible] upon the human character, were purposes for which [illegible] neither time nor care, neither early preposs[illegible] comforts and expectations. A sound understanding [illegible] him to form a satisfactory and mature judgment upon [illegible]

theological dispute; his inquiries into religious subjects were carried on in the spirit of religion; and it was some presumption of the truth of the doctrines which he zealously enforced, that they were embraced by a person of such qualifications and in such circumstances. While he avowed them with fortitude, he inculcated them in love. No man was less disposed to censure others for using that liberty of private opinion which he claimed and exercised himself; but no man was more hostile to dishonourable concealment and accommodation; no one was more faithful to the obligations of Christians and Protestants; and he might truly have said, with the excellent Dr. John Jebb, "It is not my nature to give way to expediency at the expense of right. Moderation, when real, I honour: but timidity, or craft, under that appearance, I detest."

Many of my readers who have read thus much concerning Mr. Kenrick will desire to know more. I regret that my limits will not allow me to do more than refer them to the memoir from which the above particulars have been taken.* They will there find not only an interesting account of his talents and virtues, but valuable illustrations of them in extracts from his instructive writings. The advantage to which he appears as a scholar, a tutor, a preacher, and a pastor, is rendered still higher by the engaging description of his demeanour in private life. It appears that, in the year 1786, he married Mary, daughter of Mr. John Waymouth, of Exeter; by this lady he had six children, five of whom survived, but at the birth of the last he lost the mother. During the year 1794, he formed an union with Elizabeth, second sister of the Rev. Thomas Belsham, a connexion which fully ensured to his promising family the continued benefits of maternal tenderness and wisdom.

* Prefixed to Mr. Kenrick's Exposition of the Historical Writings of the New Testament.

JOSEPH BRETLAND was a native of Exeter. His father, a respectable tradesman, married a daughter of Mr. Mills, of Somersetshire, by whom he had four children. Of these, three died in infancy; the youngest, who is the subject of this memoir, was born on the 22nd May, 1742. He never ceased, during the lives of his parents, to manifest the strongest sense of filial gratitude by a most dutiful obedience, and an anxious solicitude to contribute, as much as possible, to their comfort. His greatest pleasure appeared to consist in relating any anecdotes respecting them, especially towards the close of his life, when his friends could not render themselves more agreeable than by inviting him to recur to his favourite topic.*

At the usual age he was placed as a day scholar at the Exeter Grammar School, under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Hodgkinson and his assistants. When nearly fifteen he was removed from home to the counting house of Mr. Mourgue, a respectable merchant in this city, with whom he continued about twelve months. But his father, observing that he was frequently much oppressed with a dejection of spirits, endeavoured to discover the cause and, being questioned in the kindest manner, he at length acknowledged that he could not bring his mind to this employment, having formed the strongest inclination for the ministry. Finding, after further inquiry, that this was his decided choice, his father, though greatly disappointed at having his object so frustrated, resolved to press it no longer, but most indulgently complied with his son's desire, and he was soon after placed under the instruction of the Rev. Mr. West, then minister of the Mint congregation. To this gentleman he considered himself much indebted, and under his tuition the progress he made was rapid.

In the year 1760, Mr. Bretland went to board at Lympstone for the purpose of learning the Hebrew language, and pursuing

* This account is abridged from a memoir prefixed to two volumes of sermons, published after Mr. Bretland's death, in which is also a list of Mr. Bretland's works, twenty-two in number, critical, devotional, and practical.

his mathematical studies, under the Rev. John Turner. This step was taken preparatory to his entering the academy, established in 1761, in this city, by that gentleman in conjunction with Mr. Micaijah Towgood, Mr. Samuel Merivale, and Mr. John Hogg. He finished his course of studies in 1766, having obtained from his tutors the fullest testimonials of being well qualified to engage in the ministerial profession: indeed, he had acquired the highest esteem and approbation by the assiduous attention which he constantly bestowed on his studies, and the exemplary regularity of his moral and religious conduct. His theological tutor, in particular, to whose memory he paid an eloquent tribute of respect in one of his printed sermons, always entertained the greatest regard for him, and expressed the highest opinion of his talents and character.

In 1770, Mr. Bretland became the minister of the Mint congregation, which situation he resigned in 1772. In the following year, he opened a classical school at Exeter, and many respectable inhabitants placed their sons under his instruction. Previous to the commencement of his own school, he had kindly lent his assistance to the Rev. Joseph Twining. In consequence of Mr. Towgood's resignation in 1782, the united congregation in Exeter resolved to invite ministers to preach as candidates. Mr. Bretland was applied to, but declined. In 1789, he was again invited to the Mint Meeeting, where he continued minister until 1793. The society at George's Meeting-house then gave Mr. Bretland an invitation to supply the vacancy occasioned by the death of Mr. Tozer. This he accepted, and he remained in that connexion three years, at the end of which time he retired from the stated duties of the pulpit. Those who knew him, however, were far from acquiescing in his wish for retirement. In 1798, the Trustees of the New College, at Manchester, applied to him unanimously to become the theological Tutor, but without success. The following year, a society was formed for the purpose of establishing an academy in the West of England for the education of ministers, and he then consented to become a tutor. This institution promised to be of

extensive usefulness; and the high character those gentlemen had acquired, would, probably, in a few years, have greatly increased the number of the students, but Providence saw fit to check its success, by the unexpected removal of Mr. Kenrick, in the summer of 1804. The committee having failed in their attempt to provide a suitable successor, resolved, at a meeting held in February, 1805—"That the academy should cease for the present to be carried on in Exeter." At the same meeting the following resolution unanimously passed, "that the Rev. Joseph Bretland be requested to accept our most cordial thanks for the various and numerous services he has rendered us, both as an associate and tutor, in the management of every thing relating to our institution, from the time when it was first founded."

The following sketch from the pen of the Rev. Thomas Jervis, appeared in the Monthly Repository:

1819, July 8th. Died at his house in Exeter, aged 77, the Rev. Joseph Bretland. He was a native of that ancient city, in which he spent a long-protracted life in the uniform habits of literary retirement. Purity of heart, rectitude of conduct, and simplicity of manners, were prominent features in the character of this virtuous man. Endowed with strong intellectual powers, his application was constant and unremitting, and his mental attainments proportionably great. The love of truth might justly be considered as his ruling passion; while his calm and philosophic mind was ever assiduous and indefatigable in the pursuit of it. His religious opinions, which were strictly Unitarian, were the result of candid, free, and deliberate inquiry, adopted upon the fullest conviction, and, though formed at an early period, they were established and confirmed by the subsequent reflection, and persevering research of his maturer years. In morals, in theology, in metaphysics, and in biblical criticism, his learning was profound, his judgment solid and acute, and his integrity inflexible and unimpeached. These qualifications and endowments are sufficiently evinced by the few productions of his pen, which his genuine modesty and humility permitted him to commit to the press. As a preacher, the discourses of this distinguished scholar and divine were marked by a chaste and correct style of composition, and a rational, undissembled, and elevated piety; while they were addressed to the hearts of his hearers, in a simple and impressive tone of delivery."

In the year 1793, he married Miss Sarah Moffatt, a sister of the Rev. Mr. Moffatt, of Malmsbury. Nine years afterwards he sustained the severe and irreparable affliction of her death, occasioned by a long and most distressing consumptive complaint.

Mr. Manning conducted the service at the funeral of his venerable fellow-labourer; and Mr. Hincks soon afterwards paid a suitable tribute to his memory in a sermon preached by him at George's meeting, concluding with these words;

"In the state of weakness to which he was at last reduced, our friend's longer continuance in this scene of things could hardly have been earnestly wished. Those who loved and respected him had the satisfaction of seeing that his gentle decline was unattended by much bodily suffering, and by him was calmly watched and patiently endured, in the full confidence of Christian faith and hope. They had the pleasure to observe, that whilst the infirmities of age unnerved the energies of his mind, and deprived him of the power to instruct and delight others, they could in no degree affect that habitual and cheerful piety which had long become a part of his feeling and habits,—and they had the last soothing pleasure of knowing, that the moment which mortals dread, the moment which connects time with eternity, was to him tranquil and peaceful;—without a struggle,—almost without a sigh he sunk into the arms of death, where he will leave all weakness and imperfection to rise in immortality, in glory, and in power."

The Rev. JAMES MANNING was born at Northampton, on the 25th of August, 1754. His parents were highly respectable inhabitants of that place, and members of Dr. Doddridge's congregation. He was favoured by Providence, from his birth, with that greatest of all earthly blessings,—if altogether earthly it is to be called,—a wise, virtuous, and prudent mother. Of his father he spoke as being uniformly just and kind,—but over indulgent in the treatment of his children.

Mr. Manning received the rudiments of school education under several Dissenting ministers of his native town, first,

under the Rev. Mr. Ryland; afterwards, under the Rev. Mr. Gilbert, and the Rev. Mr. Hextal; but he does not seem to have been particularly fortunate in his earliest tutors. In 1762, when he was but eight years of age, his father died, having had seven other children, all of whom had died from constitutional weakness in their infancy. This circumstance is worthy of notice, because Mr. Manning himself was remarkable throughout his protracted life, for the most uninterrupted health and almost unbroken strength, which he ascribed to his having been, on account of the death of the other children, and his own weakness as an infant, placed with one of his father's tenants in the country, to be brought up in their rustic way, feeding on simple diet and wholesome air. Six years after his father's death, Mr. Manning's mother married the Rev. Samuel Merivale, then Divinity Tutor of the Dissenting Academy, at Exeter. This was a happy event for the surviving son. It gave him, at the period of his life when he most needed it, that sort of counsel and guidance which even his mother might not have been able to give him. Mr. Merivale seems always to have behaved towards his step-son in the kindest manner. From this time, it is probable, it was the joint wish of Mr. and Mrs. Merivale that he should be brought up to the Christian ministry. Being yet too young to enter the academy, he was placed under the care of the Rev. Mr. Kiddel, of Tiverton, having for his schoolfellow Mr. Merivale's own son. At sixteen years of age, he was entered as a Divinity student in the Exeter Academy, where he remained till the final breaking up of that institution, about four years after his admission. He was then removed to Hoxton, and placed under the care of Drs. Rees, Savage, and Kippis.

In 1775, Mr. Manning, having finished his academical pursuits, repaired to Exeter. Mr. Merivale having died a short time before, he was almost immediately engaged to succeed him, as pastor of the congregation at Thorverton. But, in less than a year, he accepted an invitation from the united congregations at George's Meeting, to assist Mr. Stephen Towgood. In

the course of the next year this gentleman died, and Mr. Manning was unanimously elected his successor. Not many months after his election, he was solemnly ordained. There were present about thirty ministers; those who officiated were Mr. M. Towgood, Mr. Manning's co-pastor; Mr. Tozer, then the pastor of another society in Exeter, but afterwards one of the ministers of George's Meeting; Dr. Harris, of London; and Sir Harry Trelawny, of Cornwall. About the same period, Mr. Manning was united to his first wife, the daughter of Walter Oke, Esq., of Pinney. This very amiable lady died in less than two years after her marriage, leaving one son, the present William Oke Manning, Esq., of London. He was again married, in the year 1780, to the daughter of John Edye, Esq., of Bristol.

Mr. Manning always testified that this connexion had been to him a source of unmingled benefit, and of the purest earthly happiness; indeed, it was impossible to visit him in his domestic circle, without observing that few men ever found greater pleasure and satisfaction in the bosom of their families. The fruits of his second marriage were three children, who all survived him; James Manning, Esq., Barister-at-Law; John Edye Manning, Esq., Registrar of the Colony of New South Wales; and a truly beloved daughter, whose affectionate and exemplary attentions to him ceased only with his latest breath. In the long course of his public ministry, Mr. Manning had many colleagues; towards all he behaved with uniform candour and kindness; but with some, especially with Dr. Carpenter, he lived on terms of the most perfect friendship, and true Christian affection.

It is only necessary to say a few words on the subject of his character. Though possessed of a sound, strong understanding, and good talents, he was one of those men, (perhaps the happiest class in the world,) in whom the moral qualities are more conspicuous than the intellectual. His temper was admirable, mild and patient, serene and cheerful, to a very remarkable degree. There was usually a smile upon his countenance, and it was faithfully indicative of the spirit within. His very voice and step were characterisic of his dispositions. If you met him

he generally looked as if he were going about doing some good; and so he was. It was one of his most favourite occupations to pay visits of charity and consolation to the poor and sick, and of kind civility to his friends. He was peculiarly earnest and active in his personal atttentions to all the charitable and benevolent institutions with which he was connected. His reputation was deservedly high in the city of Exeter, and the county of Devon, amongst all ranks and denominations of people, for the services which he was always so willing and able to render to undertakings of public utility. In 1798, in conjunction with Bishop Buller, Lord Rolle, and other influential persons, he was mainly instrumental in the establishment of the Lunatic Asylum at Exeter, and continued to the time of his death one of its most zealous and efficient governors. He was also chosen by his fellow-citizens to be one of the corporate guardians of the poor; and it is well known how frequently he accompanied the discharge of his official duties with acts of private charity. He was likewise one of the vice-presidents and visiters of the Devon County Hospital, where he found another field for the habitual exercise of his kind and benevolent feelings.

In his public services, as a Christian teacher, Mr. Manning was eminently successful. In the earlier part of his life especially, he was greatly admired and approved as a preacher; and to the last he never failed, not merely to instruct, but to interest and impress his hearers. He was in sentiment an Arian, but seldom entered upon his peculiarities of opinion in this respect; when he did so, however, he was open and manly in his statement, and earnest in the defence of his views. On these points he differed from all his colleagues since the time of Mr. Kenrick, and from a great majority of his congregation. But this circumstance produced no unpleasantness: he was too enlightened and charitable to think lightly of others for any difference of opinion; and he was himself too highly respected for his many excellent qualities, for others to think lightly of him. His devotional exercises in the public sanctuary were singularly

fervent and affecting. It was the fault of the hearers if he did not always carry their hearts with him to the throne of grace. Religion was deeply seated in his own soul, and its inspirations flowed richly from his lips.

It has been already observed that his health and strength were very remarkable. At the age of seventy-five, he had never been confined to his bed or kept from his pulpit by illness. But about this time he began to feel periodical attacks of diarrhœa, a common indication of approaching decay in old persons. Though not alarming at first in the case of Mr. Manning, they gradually increased in severity, and finally terminated his life on the 10th of September, 1831. He preached however, and administered the Lord's supper, on the first Sunday of the preceding month; though his evident feebleness on that occasion too clearly revealed the painful truth to his friends. He never preached again, but attended the chapel for the two following Sundays; after which he became rapidly worse. His end was peaceful and edifying. All his children, except Mr. John Manning, of New South Wales, were around him, and, together with his household, received his pious and affectionate blessing. His memory is dear to all. May his example be followed by all.

A short time before his death, the congregation cheered and gratified Mr. Manning by presenting him with a handsome silver vase of the value of upwards of one hundred guineas. It had this inscription:—"To the Rev. James Manning, this vase is presented, by the united congregations of Protestant Dissenters assembling at George's Meeting, Exeter, as a testimonial of their gratitude and respect for the zeal and fidelity with which he discharged the duties of the pastoral office in that place, for more than fifty-three years."

Mr. Manning published eight single sermons, and other pamphlets on religious subjects, besides a life of Mr. Towgood, and Exercises of Piety, translated from Zollikofer. For a list of his works see Unitarian Chronicle, Vol. i. p. 15, from which this sketch is taken.

CREDITON.

CREDITON, often pronounced Kirton, is an ancient and populous town, situated near the river Creedy, between two hills; one of which rises with a gradual elevation towards the north, while the other to the south, having a more quick ascent, overlooks the tops of the houses. This town consists of two parts, respectively denominated the East and the West Town; the latter of which was formerly of much greater extent than at present, upwards of four hundred and fifty houses having been destroyed by a dreadful fire, in 1743. A second fire, in 1769, consumed many of the new buildings that had been erected on the sites of those before burnt.

Crediton was probably a place of considerable consequence in the Saxon times, as no fewer than twelve Bishops had their seat here, between the years 924 and 1049, when the see was removed to Exeter. The old Church or Cathedral was, according to Leland, situated on the spot now occupied by houses on one side of the present burial-ground; but not any part of it remains. After the removal of the see, there continued in it a Chapter, under the peculiar jurisdiction and patronage of the Bishops of Exeter.—*Beauties of England and Wales.*

This town lies nearly in the centre of Devonshire, about eight miles north-west of the city of Exeter, upon a fine red gravelly soil, and is nearly a mile in length, extending from east to west. The air is most salubrious.—POLWHELE.

Population in 1811,—5178; in 1821,—5515; in 1831,—5922.

BOWDEN-HILL MEETING.

ALTHOUGH the glory of episcopacy had passed from Crediton long before the year 1662, the National Church then possessed great influence among the inhabitants. This may be accounted for partly by the circumstance that the election of its ministers, as well as the collection and appropriation of its revenues, was more popular than usual. In the reign of Edward the Sixth, a charter was granted of all the "tythes, oblations, and obventions," unto twelve governors and their successors, on certain considerations therein named. Besides other privileges, these governors, says Polwhele, have power to elect a vicar to the parish church of Crediton, who has the benefit of a parsonage-house, garden and field, and a salary of one hundred pounds a year;* also an assistant to the vicar, with a salary of eighty pounds a year. The same officers are entitled to compound for the tythes, or take them in kind as they think proper; and if any money remain, after the payment of the aforesaid salaries, they are required to divide it among the poor.

On the passing of the Act of Uniformity, the vicar of Crediton was one of those who remained

* Since considerably increased.

in the Church of England. But it was not long before a Nonconformist congregation was formed here, under the care of one of the neighbouring ejected ministers. Mr. John Pope preached in this parish some time after he had been silenced elsewhere; and when James the Second gave liberty to the Dissenters, he became the fixed pastor of a Presbyterian congregation at Crediton. In 1688 he removed to Exeter, where he died in the following year.* It is probable that Mr. Pope's successor was Mr. Carel, who, it is said, after long preaching about the country, fixed at Crediton.† The next name is Mr. Eveliegh, who was ordained here in 1702, and remained the pastor of the congregation until his death. He was one of Mr. Peirce's opponents, and published several pamphlets in the controversy of that period, particularly one entitled "The Church's Rock."‡

The present meeting-house is believed to have been built during the ministry of Mr. Eveliegh. The vestry was added in 1741, and it is the general opinion that the chapel had then been erected about twenty years. One, if not two Nonconformist chapels, of greater antiquity, are supposed to have existed; but no traces of any kind remain. This building measures forty-three feet, in the line of entrance to the pulpit, and fifty-seven in the other direction. It is situated on an elevated ground called Bowden Hill, a name by which it is often

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 425. † Ibid, p. 424.
‡ Eng. Presb., p. 149.

called; this hill is between the east and west towns of Crediton. Externally, the chapel has a very simple and venerable appearance, especially in summer, when partially seen through the trees. There is no regular burial-ground attached to it, though the remains of some children have been deposited near.

Mr. Eveliegh died in 1736. We have the names of two ministers who were probably his assistants. Mr. Peter Jillard was at Crediton a few years from 1724, when he was ordained; he was afterwards at Exeter, Bideford, Tavistock, and Bristol.* The other minister was Mr. Roger Flexman,† who came to Crediton in 1731, and remained till Mr. Eveliegh's death. Mr. Jillard and Mr. Flexman prepared the way for Mr. Micaijah Towgood, who removed from Moreton in the beginning of 1737. It was while Mr. Towgood was at Crediton that he published his most celebrated works. Although he pursued those pastoral plans which rendered his ministry so useful at Moreton, he found time for enlightening the world as to the great principles of religious liberty. He published in 1737, "High-flown Episcopal and Priestly Claims Examined"; in 1739, "The Dissenter's Apology," being a reply to Dr. Warren; in 1741, "Spanish Cruelty and

* Eng. Presb., p. 146.

† I find it is not quite clear that Mr. Flexman was *settled* at Crediton as assistant to Mr. Eveliegh. The writer of the historical papers in the English Presbyterian, states that Mr. Flexman removed from Modbury to Bow. In the same papers, however, is an amusing anecdote relating to his desire to be chosen at Crediton.—Eng. Presb., p. 155.

Injustice," a plea for a war with Spain; in 1742, "Recovery from Sickness," a present to those of his congregation who had been raised from dangerous disorders; in 1745, a sermon on the absurdities of Popery, in reference to the Pretender's invasion; in the same year, "The Dissenting Gentleman's Letters in answer to Mr. White"; and lastly, in one small octavo volume, "An Essay on the Character of Charles the First." Nor, while his pen was engaged in these rapid and various labours, all accomplished during the short space of twelve years, did he neglect the interests of the people committed to his charge. In 1743, while he was in the midst of his literary exertions, occurred that dreadful fire which deprived four hundred and fifty families of their dwellings, and destroyed property to the amount of £40,000. Immediately the house and the purse of Mr. Towgood were opened for the sufferers; and, in connexion with the minister of the Established Church, he solicited subscriptions and obtained a very large sum for their relief. On the following Sunday he preached, in reference to this calamity, an affecting sermon, which was afterwards printed.*

Mr. Towgood removed to Exeter, in 1749, and was succeeded at Crediton by Mr. Berry, who was the pastor of the congregation thirty-one years. The next minister was Mr. Hogg, who previously officiated at Sidmouth. In 1785, he was followed by Mr. W. J. Hort, whose ministry here lasted four

* Manning's Life of Towgood, p. 22.

years. Mr. Thomas Reynell then came, and remained with the society till 1797. It has since been served by Mr. Holt, Mr. Edwards, Mr. (now Dr.) Davies, Mr. John Lewis, Mr. Watts, Mr. Lewis Lewis, Mr. G. P. Hinton, and Mr. Johns. Of Mr. Holt a memoir has been given in connexion with Cirencester. Mr. Davies removed to Taunton, where he officiated as minister, and conducted a highly respectable school many years; he has now relinquished both offices, and lives in London. Mr. Watts has lived at Frome many years; in 1802, he edited Dr. Isaac Watts's "Faithful Enquiry after the Ancient and Original Doctrine of the Trinity taught by Christ and his Apostles." Mr. Lewis Lewis removed to Dorchester, and Mr. G. P. Hinton to Marshfield. To Mr. Johns, the present minister, the public are indebted for several single sermons, and several volumes of poems. Not a few of these elegant productions have been occasioned by the deaths of members of his congregation.

Until 1757, the Presbyterian meeting-house was the only one in Crediton; in that year the Independent congregation was formed; in 1809, the Wesleyan; and in 1816, the Baptist. In the more ancient but less populous house of prayer, Arian and Unitarian sentiments have been inculcated at least a century.

The congregational institutions are a Sunday-school, a vestry library, and a fellowship fund.

Ministers.

JOHN POPE.....	1668—1688.
ROBERT CAREL.....	1688—1702.
JOSIAH EVELIEGH	1702—1736.
PETER JILLARD.....	1724—1727.
ROGER FLEXMAN	1731—1736.
MICAIJAH TOWGOOD	1737—1749.
JOHN BERRY	1751—1782.
JOHN HOGG.....	1782—1785.
WILLIAM JILLARD HORT	1785—1789.
THOMAS REYNELL	1791—1797.
JAMES HOLT	1799—1804.
JOHN EDWARDS.....	1806—1808.
HENRY DAVIES, LL. D.....	1808—1810.
JOHN LEWIS.....	1810—1810.
GABRIEL WATTS.....	1812—1812.
LEWIS LEWIS.....	1814—1817.
GEORGE PULLIN HINTON	1817—1820.
JOHN JOHNS.....	1821.

The Rev. THOMAS REYNELL was the third son of the Rev. John Reynell, first of Plymouth and afterwards of Thorverton. He received his early education from his great uncle, the Rev. John Reynell, of Totness, a favourite pupil of Dr. Doddridge. In 1784 he removed to Daventry, where his abilities and moral excellence obtained for him much respect. At the expiration of five years, he officiated some time at Crediton; his talents as a preacher were held in high estimation; but the state of his health, combined with other circumstances, obliged him to relinquish the exercise of his profession. After a short residence in the Peninsula, he settled in London, and there spent nearly the latter half of his life.

Mr. Reynell was possessed of no ordinary talents; but, like many other men, whose merit is conspicuous to every one but themselves, he courted retirement, not because he was indolent, or indifferent to the improvement of mankind, but because of his extreme modesty, which made him too diffident of his own powers. Those who were best acquainted with him, could not fail to be impressed by the excellence of his mind, heart, and conduct.

In 1792 Mr. Reynell published, anonymously, some Observations on Mr. Manning's Sketch of the Life and Writings of Mr. Towgood. He also published, by request, a sermon preached at Exeter, before the Western Unitarian Society, in 1794. These productions gave sufficient proof of his ability, and afforded the promise of still greater things—a promise which would, doubtless, have been more fully realized, had the circumstances in which he was afterwards placed been more favourable to the exercise and development of his talents. Though he lived little in the world, he nevertheless enjoyed the society of a few congenial literary friends who duly appreciated his worth; and his leisure hours were devoted to miscellaneous literary undertakings, the fruits of which adorn the pages of several anonymous publications.

Mr. Reynell was never married, but for his kindred he ever retained the warmest regard. He died in London, Dec. 19th, 1831, in the sixty-third year of his age.*

* Mon. Repos., N. S., Vol. v. p. 142.

MORETON-HAMPSTEAD.

"A TOWN in Devonshire, with a market on Saturday, and manufactures of woollen cloth and yarn. It has the vestiges of two castles, or forts, and in the vicinity are a Druidical temple and a cromlech."—BROOKE.

"The town of Moreton-hampstead, about thirteen miles to the south-west of Exeter, is situated upon an eminence in the midst of a vale; which, though not so rich as the vales to the east of the county, yet bears similar marks of cultivation."

"It is remarkable, that this town is nearly equi-distant from six other towns—Okehampton, Exeter, Crediton, Newton, Ashburton, Chudleigh. And the periphery of a circle, about four miles round the town, would run through fourteen parishes."—POLWHELE.

Population in 1811,—1653; in 1821,—1932; in 1831,—1864.

GENERAL BAPTIST AND PRESBYTERIAN CHAPELS.

In this town there is a chapel of each of these denominations. A few years since, the two societies united and placed themselves under the care of one minister. From that time it has been their custom to meet at the Baptist place of worship on one part of the Sunday, and at the Presbyterian on the other.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH.

Neither the age nor the origin of this church can be exactly ascertained. No document relating to its early history has been preserved, and little information can be gleaned from published works. Traditionary accounts there are several; and these have stimulated a few lovers of such lore to search for authentic records; but their labours have been in vain. All, therefore, that we can do, with regard to the commencement of the society, is to shew that those accounts are supported by general historical facts.

The present members of the Baptist church at

Moreton have heard from their ancestors, that it is very ancient, that it once suffered dreadful persecutions, and that it never adopted Trinitarianism. Concerning the first point, Crosby has shewn* that many impugners of infant baptism were scattered over this country about the middle of the sixteenth century. These persons, though maintaining several noxious opinions which have long been unknown among the Baptists, were probably the founders of the sect in England. Burnet thus bears similar testimony: "At this time (1547) there were many Anabaptists in several parts of England; they were, generally, Germans, whom the Revolutions had forced to change their seats." In 1608, a writer called Enoch Clapham published a work, from which it appears there were then many Baptists in this country, that they complained of the application of the term Anabaptists to them, as an unjust term of reproach, and that they were distinguished by insisting on the validity of Adult Baptism, in opposito the Baptism of the Church of England and the Puritans.† Neal, who was far from being partial to their cause, admits that, in 1644, they "made a considerable figure, and spread themselves into separate congregations."‡ "So wonderfully (he adds) did this opinion (the necessity of 'dipping') prevail, that there were no less than forty-seven congregations in the country, and seven in London, who

* Crosby's History of the Baptists, Vol. i.
† Neal's History of the Puritans, Vol. ii. p. 111.
‡ Quoted by Crosby, Vol. i. p. 88.

published a confession of their faith." It is probable that the Moreton church was one of these. That there were Baptists in this part of the kingdom, appears from "the confession of faith by the churches in Somerset and the counties adjacent,"* The inference is also strengthened by the circumstance that many of the early English Baptists, coming from the Low Countries, followed the woollen trade, for which this town was long noted. I have mentioned in the history of the Honiton congregation, that Mr. Jerom Maynard, its zealous founder, went to Moreton to learn that trade, probably in the year 1690, and, during his apprenticeship, was connected with a General Baptist Society.

There is also a tradition that the Baptists at Moreton once suffered dreadful persecution. If they did not they escaped the fate of their brethren, and the founders of their churches in other parts of the kingdom. The Government, drawing no distinction between the harmless religionists who fled to this country for protection and the dangerous fanatics of the same name in Holland, persecuted the former without mercy. In 1535, fourteen Hollanders, several if not all of whom were stigmatized as Anabaptists, on account of their "heresies," were burnt by pairs, in various places; and it is not a little remarkable that those heresies were attributed to the use of the Scriptures, which were then becoming known, in consequence of the

* Crosby, Vol. i.; Appendix, p. 27.

Reformation, followed by the pious efforts of Tindale and Coverdale. Fuller says "that, in 1538, a match being made between King Henry and the Lady Anne of Cleve, Dutchmen flocked faster than usual into England, and soon after began to broach their strange opinions, being branded with the general name of Anabaptists."*—"I read (he continues) that four of them, three men and one woman, all Dutch, bare faggots at Paul's Cross, and, three days after, a man and woman, of their sect, were burnt in Smithfield."† Latimer while preaching before

* Fuller's Church History, Book iv. p. 229.

† If any apology may be offered for the severity with which these persons were treated, it must be found in the crimes committed by their countrymen of the same denomination, about this time, in many parts of Europe. A distinction undoubtedly ought to have been drawn, as I have intimated above, between the innocent and the criminal members of this sect; but our surprise at the persecution of the former is lessened by the account which historians have given us of the "rebellious principles and tumultuary proceedings" of the Anabaptists in Germany, Switzerland, and Holland. "There stands upon record (says Mosheim) a most shocking instance of this, in the dreadful commotions that were excited at Munster, in 1533, by some Dutch Anabaptists, who chose that city as the scene of their horrid operations, and committed in it such deeds as would surpass all credibility, were they not attested in a manner that excludes every degree of doubt and uncertainty. A handful of madmen, who had gotten into their heads the visionary notion of a new and spiritual kingdom, soon to be established in an extraordinary manner, formed themselves into a society, under the guidance of a few illiterate leaders chosen out of the populace; and they persuaded, not only the ignorant multitude, but even several among the learned, that Munster was to be the seat of this new and heavenly Jerusalem, whose spiritual dominion was thence to be propagated to all parts of the earth. The bold ringleaders of this furious tribe were, John Matthison, John Bockhold, a tailor of Leyden, one Gerard, with some others, whom the blind rage of enthusiasm, or the still more culpable principles of sedition, had embarked in this extravagant and desperate cause. They made themselves masters of the city of Munster, deposed the magistrates, and committed all the enormous crimes, and ridiculous follies, which the most perverse and infernal imagination could suggest. John Bockhold was proclaimed king and legislator of this new

Edward VI., thus testified to the fortitude with which they suffered.* "The Anabaptists that were burnt here in divers towns in England, as I heard of credible men, I saw them not myself, went to

hierarchy: but his reign was transitory, and his end deplorable; for Munster was, in 1536, retaken after a long siege by its bishop and sovereign Count Waldeck, the new Jerusalem of the Anabaptists destroyed, and its mock monarch punished with a most painful and ignominious death. The disorders occasioned by the Anabaptists at this period, not only in Westphalia but also in other parts of Germany, shewed too plainly to what horrid extremities the pernicious doctrines of this wrong-headed sect were calculated to lead the inconsiderate and unwary."

"The progress of this turbulent sect (says the same author in a preceding paragraph) in almost all the countries of Europe, alarmed all who had any concern for the public good. Princes and sovereign states exerted themselves to check these rebellious enthusiasts in their career, by issuing out, first, severe edicts to restrain their violence, and employing, at length, capital punishments to conquer their obstinacy. But here a maxim, already verified by repeated experience, received a new degree of confirmation; for the conduct of the Anabaptists, under the pressure of persecution, plainly shewed the extreme difficulty of correcting or influencing, by the prospect of suffering, or even by the terrors of death, minds that are either deeply tainted with the poison of fanaticism, or firmly bound by the ties of religion. In almost all the countries of Europe, an unspeakable number of these unhappy wretches preferred death, in its worst forms, to a retraction of their errors. Neither the view of the flames that were kindled to consume them, nor the ignominy of the gibbet, nor the terrors of the sword, could shake their invincible, but ill placed constancy, or make them abandon tenets that appeared dearer to them than life and all its enjoyments."..... "But as the greatest part of these enthusiasts had communicated to the multitude their visionary notions concerning the new spiritual kingdom that was soon to be erected, and the abolition of magistracy and civil government that was to be the immediate effect of this great revolution, this rendered the very name of an Anabaptist unspeakably odious, and made it always excite the idea of a seditious incendiary, a pest to human society. It is true, that many Anabaptists suffered death, not on account of their being considered as rebellious subjects, but merely because they were judged to be incorrigible heretics; for in this century the error of limiting the administration of baptism to adult persons only, and the practice of re-baptizing such as had received that sacrament in a state of infancy, were looked upon as most flagitious and intolerable heresies." MOSHEIM'S *Ecclesiastical History*, Ed. 1826, Vol. iv. p. 390.

* Latimer's Lent Sermons, p. 56.

their death even intrepid, as ye will say, without any fear in the world, cheerfully." In 1615, we find the tyranny of the civil magistrate growing with the growth and strengthening with the strength of these unfortunate men. "That which the Baptists now chiefly inveigh against (says Crosby, in reference to this period) is the pride, luxury, and oppression of the lord bishops, or pretended spiritual power, whereby they were exposed to great hardships and cruel persecutions." . . . . . "Their sufferings were increased rather than lessened. They were not only railed against in the pulpits under the names of Heretics, Schismatics, and Anabaptists, and harassed in the spiritual courts; but the temporal sword was used against them; their goods seized; their persons confined in stinking gaols where they were deprived of their wives, children, and friends, till the Divine Majesty was pleased to release several of them by death."* Tracing the progress of this wicked spirit, we find it, in 1645, dictating an ordinance of Parliament against lay preaching,—a practice which prevailed to a greater extent among the Baptists than among any other denomination; but though much inconvenience was occasioned by this arbitrary edict, it does not appear to have been strictly carried into effect. Proceeding still farther, we come to the reigns of Charles the Second and James the Second, whose names are associated with the most iniquitous cruelties towards Dissenters of every denomination. In the West of England those

* Crosby, Vol. i. p. 129.

cruelties were peculiarly severe, and there is reason to suppose that the Baptist church at Moreton, consisting as it did, of men attached both from education and conviction to the cause of religious liberty, experienced its full share of persecution.

The other tradition preserved by the Baptists at Moreton,—that none of their ancestors believed the doctrine of the Trinity, is also in accordance with general historical facts. Among the heretical opinions of which the fourteen Hollanders were accused in 1535, and for which they were burnt to death, was the denying Christ to be both God and man. Bishop Burnet's account* of the "heresies" of the Anabaptists who were driven to England, in 1547, by the Revolutions in Germany, is of the same nature, and leads to the conclusion that some of the earliest Unitarians in this country were advocates of adult baptism. "Upon Luther's first preaching in Germany (says Burnet) there arose many who, building on some of his principles, carried things much further than he did. The chief foundation he laid down was, that the Scripture was to be the only rule of Christians. Upon this, many argued that the mysteries of *the Trinity* and Christ's incarnation and sufferings, of the fall of man and the aids of grace were, indeed, philosophical subtilties and only pretended to be *deduced* from Scripture, as almost all opinions of religion were, and, therefore, they rejected them. Among these the baptism of infants was one." From the

* History of the Reformation, Vol. ii. p. 110.

middle of the sixteenth to that of the seventeenth century, the persecutions which the Baptists endured were occasioned as much by their rejection of the commonly received opinions concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, as by their advocacy of adult baptism. It is true that, in the year 1646, seven congregations in London, commonly called Anabaptists, published a confession of faith,* one of the articles of which relates to the existence of "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit,"† "in one Divine and infinite Being,"—but this differs materially from the "orthodox" Trinity; and it is remarkable that the confession of the churches "in Somerset and the counties adjacent," in which the Moreton Baptists probably joined, omits all mention of this perplexing and often disputed doctrine.

The Baptist congregation at Moreton appear to have ministered to each other in holy things till the beginning of the last century. The first name on my list of pastors is Henry Terry, who undertook the office about the year 1720, removed to Tiverton in 1731, and died there in 1759.‡ He was succeeded by Mr. Foot—a name well known, for many

* Crosby, Vol. i. Appendix, p. 7.

† Even here we have an instance of the desire of the early Baptists to be guided by what they deemed the word of God alone. Their belief that "*the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit,*" were one God was, doubtless, founded on the well known passage 1 John v. 7, where, and where only, those words occur in juxta-position. It may be questioned whether they would have held the doctrine of the Trinity in any form, if with their views of the sufficiency of Scripture, and the danger of *deducing* opinions not clearly stated, they had known, what the best divines on all sides now admit, that the passage in the Epistle of St John is a forgery.

‡ Mr. Wilson's MSS.

years, among the Dissenters of Bristol, to which place he removed in the course of five or six years. The congregation were then served by Mr. Richard Harrison, of whom there is a short memoir in connexion with the account of the General Baptist church at Taunton, where he was settled eighteen years. This gentleman was succeeded by a Mr. Thomas, who appears to have undertaken the charge in the autumn of 1738, mention being made, in the church books, of the expense of his journey and the carriage of his goods at that period. Mr. Thomas quitted Moreton in 1760, and was followed by Mr. Collier, who, after serving the church twenty years, died, and was succeeded by Mr. Isaac,—the last Baptist minister.

It does not appear that this society was at any time very numerous. They assembled for many years in a building for which they paid rent; their present meeting-house was built in 1786. Mr. Isaac, soon after the commencement of whose ministry this humble edifice was raised, was a decided Unitarian. There is a marble tablet, over the pulpit, with the following inscription, to the memory of his predecessor:—

JOHN COLLIER, TWENTY YEARS PASTOR OF THIS CHURCH: DIED THE 14th OF DECEMBER, 1780. IN RESPECT TO HIS MEMORY THIS MARBLE IS PLACED BY HIS WIDOW.

OUR FRIEND LAZARUS SLEEPETH.

JESUS.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

This society was founded by Mr. Robert Woolcombe, who was ejected from the living of Moreton, in 1662. Many of his congregation adhered to him, and provided a place of worship, in which they assembled, till prevented by Acts of Parliament. They then met as often as they could in secret, sometimes in neighbouring woods; but their adversaries watched them, and procured informers to swear against them. On several occasions they were brought before magistrates, had their houses rifled and their goods confiscated; and to complete all, their worthy minister, who had been expelled five miles from the town, was seized while paying a visit to his flock and committed to prison.*

This persecution lasted with little intermission till 1687, when Mr. Woolcombe and eleven others procured a licence, dated at Whitehall, and signed by the Earl of Sunderland. For this licence a considerable sum of money is said to have been extorted from the humble flock;—a circumstance rendered particularly mortifying by the appearance, a few weeks afterwards, of the general declaration of liberty of conscience. In the first year of the reign of William and Mary, their prospects became still brighter in consequence of the passing of the Act of Toleration, which enabled Mr. Woolcombe to dis-

* These particulars are chiefly taken from a MS. account drawn up by a member of the congregation, and sent me by the Rev. J. Smethurst.

charge his duties, fearlessly, till his death. It is recorded that during the twenty-five years between the ejectment and the licence, the rent of the house and the salary of the minister were regularly paid.

The first place of worship was a dwelling house, converted to that purpose, after the Act of Toleration, and before the death of Mr. Woolcombe. The latter event occurred in 1692, and was followed by a division in the congregation. The house being the property of the minority, a new one was erected for the majority, chiefly at the expense of the Rev. Angel Sparke. This gentleman was ordained here in 1692, and was the only regular Presbyterian minister in the town, from the death of Mr. Woolcombe till his own; to him was paid the rent of the new meeting-house. During his ministry, the minority rejoined their brethren and the original meeting house was quitted. Mr. Sparke's auditors were, consequently, very numerous;—in 1715, they amounted to six hundred; and the new meeting-house being too small for them was enlarged, by voluntary subscriptions, in 1718. Thirty years afterwards, this building and the garden adjoining were purchased of Mr. Sparke's relatives, by means of the contributions of the Society, in the name of Mr. Richard Heard, and in the year 1760 it was, by him, assigned to trustees, for the use of the congregation for the term of nine hundred and ninety-eight years. One more change must be mentioned;—the meeting-house, when it had been built about a century, became ruinous and

was taken down. In November, 1801, the minister and congregation left the old building and commenced attending at the General Baptist chapel, where they worshiped nearly twelve months. On the 12th of February, 1802, Mr. Rowland laid the first stone of the new house, and on the 31st of October, in the same year, it was opened:—the Rev. James Manning, of Exeter, preaching in the morning and afternoon. The chapel will seat three hundred and twenty persons. A builder at Exeter agreed to erect it for £269. 15*s*., and the materials of the old place of worship. There is a burial-ground attached to the present building.

The ministers from the death of Mr. Sparke, in 1721 to the union of the two congregations, were Micaijah Towgood, Daniel Harson, John Parr, James Rowland, James Hews Bransby, Thomas Cooper, and John Smethurst. The congregation were frequently without a settled pastor. After the death of Mr. Rowland, in January, 1803, they were supplied by two students from the academy at Exeter, under the direction of the Rev. T. Kenrick and the Rev. T. Bretland; these were Mr. Shute, who, afterwards, accepted an invitation from Shepton Mallet, and Mr. Bransby, who became pastor of the Moreton society, September 30th, 1804. In the following year, Mr. Bransby, removed to Dudley; and for the next eleven years, the congregation had no pastor. During a great part of this interval, services were regularly conducted by Mr. Thomas Mardon, Mr. Thomas White, and Mr Edward

White, members of the congregation, and for the last two or three years, exclusively by the last of these gentlemen. In the summer of 1815, the Rev. Thomas Cooper entered into an engagement with the society, which continued till Lady-day, 1817, when he went to Jamaica. A few months afterwards, Mr. Smethurst, the present minister, quitted the Rev. R. Aspland's Academy at Hackney, where Mr. Cooper had also been educated, and entered on his pastoral duties at Moreton. On the the union of the two congregations, at the close of the following year, the worshipers in the Presbyterian chapel amounted to about one hundred and fifty. At present, the numbers average eighty in the morning, and two hundred in the afternoon. All are united as worshipers of the only living and true God and disciples of his beloved Son; all profess the simple faith of the early Christians, "*To us there is one God the Father, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*"

Ministers.

GENERAL BAPTIST.

Henry Terry	1720—1731.
William Foot	1731—1736.
Richard Harrison, M.A.	1736—1738.
—— Thomas	1738—1760.
John Collier	1760—1780.
Jacob Isaac	1780—1818.

PRESBYTERIAN.

Robert Woolcombe, M.A.	1662—1692.
Angel Sparke	1692—1721.
Micaijah Towgood	1722—1736.
Daniel Harson	1737—1742.
John Parr	1743—1775.
James Rowland	1776—1803.
James Hews Bransby	1804—1805.
Thomas Cooper	1815—1817.
John Smethurst	1817.

Robert Woolcombe, M.A., born at Chudleigh, where his grandfather was minister. Presented to the living of Moreton by one of the Courtney family, and ordained at Dartmouth, in 1657. He was a hard student, a great philosopher, a sound solid preacher, and a courageous advocate of Nonconformity. For this he lost not only a good benefice, but a good estate; his father disinherited him, and made his son his heir, charging in his will that he should not have the educating of him. However, he lived comfortably and contentedly, and found "a good conscience a continual feast." He died at his house in Chudleigh, 1692.*

William Foot was born at Plymouth, in 1707. He received the rudiments of his education in his native town, and prosecuted his studies first under the Rev. Henry Grove, of Taunton, and afterwards under the Rev. John Alexander, of Stratford-upon-Avon. In 1728, Mr. Foot became the pastor of a Calvinistic Baptist congregation at Tiverton; in 1731, he re-

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 384.

moved to Moreton-Hampstead; and in 1736 to Bristol, where he officiated to a small society of General Baptists, in Callow-Hill Street. About the same time, he opened a classical school on St. Michael's Hill, which he conducted with great reputation many years; in this establishment he was succeeded by Dr. Estlin.

As an author, Mr. Foot is principally known by his "Plain Account of the Ordinance of Baptism," in a course of letters to Dr. Hoadly, Bishop of Winchester. These letters appeared in two distinct publications, the first was printed in 1756, and the other in 1758. A complete edition was published in 1766, and a third edition, with a biographical sketch of the author, by Dr. Toulmin, in 1787. These letters have obtained extensive circulation both in England and America. Mr. Foot's earliest publication was "A Practical Discourse concerning Baptism," the first edition of which appeared in 1739, and the second in 1750; another was published in 1820, with a valuable fragment of the author's on Christian communion, breathing a liberal and truly Christian spirit. This edition owes its existence to my esteemed relative the Rev. W. H. Murch, Theological Tutor of the Baptist College at Stepney. Mr. Foot was also the author of a small work on Education, designed to explain the course of studies pursued in his own school.

Mr. Foot was married, during his residence at Tiverton, to Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. John Murch, of Plymouth, and left two daughters,—Elizabeth, who became the wife of Mr. Merlott, an Alderman of Bristol, and Mary, who died unmarried a few years since in the same city. These ladies manifested the value of the example and instructions of their revered parent; many are there who would bear willing and grateful testimony to their amiable dispositions, the warmth of their devotional sentiments, and their judicious, ever active benevolence. Mr. Foot's religious opinions underwent a considerable change after he entered upon the ministry, and at the close of his life were either Arian or Unitarian. The following inscription is found in the Baptist burial-ground, Red-cross, Bristol:—

"To the memory of the Rev. and learned William Foot, for many years minister of the Gospel in this city. He died May 13th, 1782, in the 75th year of his age. Undissembled piety, integrity, candour, and liberality, eminently distinguished his character. Go, reader, study like him to approve thyself unto God, and thy latter end, like his, will be peace." *

John Collier was born at Trowbridge, in the year 1720. His father, a respectable tradesman, was great-grandson of the Rev. Thomas Collier, a Yorkshire clergyman, who published many theological treatises, and in particular "A Body of Divinity," which, with its endless divisions and sub-divisions, and its labyrinth of postulates, proofs, and corollaries, was once, agreeably to the taste of the age, held in considerable esteem.

The subject of this notice received the rudiments of his education in a humble cottage-seminary at the foot of the Mendip-hills. He soon, however, had the privilege of being removed to a far better school, at Bridgwater, where he enjoyed the most favourable opportunities of satisfying his thirst for knowledge. From his childhood, he possessed strong powers of intellect, and was scrupulous on all occasions in obeying the dictates of his conscience: but it was not before he attained his twenty-sixth year, that, yielding to the wishes of his parents, he resolved to devote himself to the ministry. In 1747, he became a student in the Dissenting Academy at Kendal. That institution was under the able superintendance of the Rev. Dr. Rotheram; and had the merit of sending forth many gentlemen who afterwards distinguished themselves in the Nonconformist churches and in the various walks of literature and science. Mr. Collier's diligence was unremitting, and he was warmly esteemed both by his tutor and fellow-students.

In 1751, in consequence of Dr. Rotheram's declining health, the academy was discontinued. Upon this, Mr. Collier went to

* Evans's History of Bristol, Vol. ii. p. 326.

London, where he remained three years. During that period, he devoted many hours of every day to the study of medicine, and he was regularly, once or twice a week, an attendant in the dissecting rooms of the hospitals. On leaving the metropolis, he took up his abode at Trowbridge; and was soon chosen to be pastor of the General Baptists in that town, in conjunction with Mr. Waldron. He also undertook the pastoral charge of a similar society at Southwick, a village about two miles from Trowbridge.* His domestic prospects were brightened by his marriage with Miss Sarah Wereat, the daughter of an opulent farmer in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Collier's pulpit services were very generally admired, so much so, that in the spring of 1760, the Baptist Society at Moreton sent a deputation to Trowbridge for the purpose of urging him to settle among them. At first, he turned a deaf ear to the proposal. His resolution, however, gave way to repeated importunities, and before the close of the year, he removed to Moreton. Here he continued to reside until his death, which occurred after a short illness in the sixtieth year of his age. He was interred in the churchyard at Moreton, as the Dissenters had then no burying-ground of their own. His funeral sermon was preached by his friend Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Toulmin.

Mr. Collier was a man of reading and reflection. His favourite book was the Bible. All his inquiries were guided by an ardent desire to know the truth; and he had the intrepidity of a martyr. No false shame, no dread of consequences to himself, could deter him from the open avowal of his convictions. Many of his friends were desirous that he should take out a diploma, and practise as a physician; but, attached as he

* This information was not received until after the account of the Trowbridge and Southwick churches had passed through the press. It appears from the above statement, that Mr. Collier was connected with the Trowbridge church from 1754 to 1760. His name does not appear in the Trowbridge church-book; nor did my correspondent in that town discover any traces of his ministry there. The records, however, of the transactions at this period are obviously imperfect.

was through life to medical inquiries, he declined the honour and emoluments of the profession, and found his chief happiness among his books, in the discharge of his pastoral duties, and in the endearments of his home. To the poor he was particularly kind; nothing could exceed the activity with which he ministered, especially in the hour of sickness, to their wants. His medical advice was always at their service, and many were the cases in which it was given with success. *

JAMES ROWLAND, born at St. David's, in Pembrokeshire, about the year 1756. Settled at Moreton when he was twenty-one years of age, and died of an apoplectic fit when he had lived there about twenty-six years. During the greater part of the time he kept a grammar school. His death occurred at Lamerton, where he was visiting a friend, and by its suddenness made a great impression upon the congregation. The Rev. James Manning, of Exeter, preached a useful and affecting funeral sermon on the following Sunday, from the words of our Saviour, John xi. 25: "I am the resurrection and the life."

JACOB ISAAC. Of Mr. Isaac's education and early life I have not been able to obtain any particulars. He became the minister of the General Baptist congregation at Moreton-Hampstead, in 1780, and continued in that office till his death, December 2, 1818. He married the only daughter of his predecessor Mr. Collier, and, in course of time, his connexion with the Dissenting ministry was further strengthened by the marriage of his own daughter to the Rev. J. H. Bransby, who was, for a short time, the Presbyterian Pastor at Moreton. Mr. Isaac was one of the earliest supporters of the Western Unitarian Society; and, in 1798, he delivered an excellent sermon at the annual meeting, "On the Consolations of Pure Christianity,"

* Communicated by the Rev. J. H. Bransby.

which was immediately published. The following sketch of his character concludes the very brief notice of the death of Mr. Isaac in the Monthly Repository: "For deep and habitual seriousness of spirit, for the most engaging simplicity of manners, for undaunted zeal in the cause of his Divine Master, for a generous, delicate regard to the sorrows of the poor, the sick and the destitute, and for pious gratitude and resignation, amidst agonies that human skill could neither remove nor soften, he has left behind him a name, on which his family and friends will long muse with a melancholy joy." *

* Mon. Repos., Vol. xiii. p. 772.

TAVISTOCK.

"On the banks of the Tamar, which divides this parish from Cornwall, are several enchanting, picturesque views. That river is in Cornwall, and navigable to ships of two hundred tons, within four miles of the town of Tavistock. The Duke of Bedford hath five manors here, which comprehend almost the whole parish;—the manor of Tavistock—of Hurdwick—of Morvell—of Ogbear—of Parswell—and Blanch Down Chase. There are very good quarries of excellent slate in this parish. The town of Tavistock is situated near the south extremity of the parish, on the river Tavy, in a very fruitful vale, in that part almost triangular; it is surrounded with hills, and is in the manor of Tavistock."—POLWHELE.

Population in 1811,—4723; in 1821,—5483; in 1831,—5602.

ABBEY CHAPEL.

THE history of this congregation derives much of its interest from its connexion with the history of the house of Russell. My readers need not be reminded of the many *public* efforts which have been made by this illustrious family to promote the cause of civil and religious liberty. But it is not so well known that their private transactions are equally praiseworthy;—that, though attached to the Church of England and anxious to render it pure and efficient, they yet encourage, within each sphere of their influence, the fullest exercise of the rights of conscience. It is now peculiarly interesting to contemplate their conduct at Tavistock two hundred years ago; to see them, when religious liberty was so ill understood—when fanaticism on the one hand and tyranny on the other rendered useful interference so difficult—boldly throw the shield of their sanction over the oppressed Nonconformists, and allow them to worship where none could dare to make them afraid.*

* William, the third Earl of Bedford, to whom this history refers, was the father of the celebrated Lord William Russell. He is represented by his distinguished descendant Lord John Russell, as having "steered a wavering and unsteady course" during the civil conflicts of the times.

About the middle of the seventeenth century, the living of Tavistock being vacant, the Earl of Bedford promised to present and pay any minister whom the inhabitants should choose. They accordingly fixed upon Mr. Thomas Larkham, who in early life had been compelled by the tyranny of the bishops to take refuge in New England, but returned to his native land just at this period.* While labouring with great zeal and success, he was ejected by the Act of Uniformity. His attached congregation, unwilling to be deprived of his services, applied in their perplexity to the Countess of Bedford, who was pre-eminently distinguished by pious and amiable qualities. Her ladyship not only listened to their application with much kindness, but solicited the Earl to allow them an asylum in some

But the noble author adds, that "the situation of affairs might have disturbed the resolution of the wisest heads."—*Life of Lord William Russell.*

We find no proofs of indecision in the notices of the protection afforded by the Earl of Bedford to those who were suffering for conscience' sake. It was his patriot-son, however, who laid the foundation of the glorious fame of the family. The present statesman has thus been addressed by a modern poet:

"Whose nobility comes to thee, stamped with a seal
Far, far more ennobling than monarch e'er set;
With the blood of thy race offered up for the weal
Of a nation that swears by that martyrdom yet.
* * * * * * * *
"Like the boughs of that laurel, by Delphi's decree
Set apart for the fane, and its service divine;
All the branches that spring from the old Russell tree
Are by Liberty claimed for the use of her shrine."

Lines addressed to Lord John Russell, on his intimating some idea of giving up political pursuits. From the *Morning Chronicle*, 1819.

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 407.

vacant apartment of the Abbey; and he complied with her request by granting them the free use of the Refectory as their place of worship. He also ordered an annuity of ten pounds to be paid for promoting the objects of the society. From that time to the present, the congregation have continued to assemble in this venerable building, and the annuity has been regularly paid.

"Pleasant (said William of Malmesbury) is the Abbey amidst the woods, that stand so conveniently around it." And from other descriptions which have been handed down to us, it appears that both the situation and the building were well worthy the attention of the traveller.* But Time, the great

* The following account by Risdon, written before the year 1630, contains many curious particulars. He had been relating the well-known story of Edgar, Ethelwold, and Elflida,—Orgarius, the father of Elflida, and Duke of Devon, having kept his court at Tavistock.

"Ordolph, son of the said duke, made choice of this place as fittest to lay the foundation of an abbey, which was the original of conducing fame to the town, being thereunto admonished by a vision, anno 961. Which monastery he replenished with black monks, Augustines, and consecrated it to St. Mary and St. Burien. By whose ruins you may now aim at the antique magnificence thereof; where once you might have seen the sculpture of Orgarius aforenamed, and the huge proportion of his son Ordulph's tomb; for he was of a large stature, and giant-like strength. St. Rumon, much spoken of as bishop of the place, lieth there likewise interred. And in that abbey lies buried Edwin, son of King Ethelred, (as saith Malmsbury,) treacherously slain by the Danes, whom, for his regardless deportment, or otherwise, by way of reproach, they called king of the churls. This monastery had scarcely attained to thirty years, before it was devastated by these merciless Danes, who spared not religious houses more than other buildings. Notwithstanding, it revived again, and by a laudable ordinance, had lectures read in the ancient Saxon tongue, and so continued to our grandsires' days to preserve the antiquities, laws, and histories formerly written in that language, from oblivion; a thing almost now come to pass. This fabric was endowed by the pious charity of that age with large possessions, which, at the fatal downfall of such structures, was valued at £902. 5*s.* 7*d.*, and thereby the abbot grown rich and proud,

destroyer of all things, has only spared a few fragments of the ancient edifice, and these are chiefly incorporated with other buildings. The Abbey Church, described by Leland as one hundred and

his ambition affected a mitre, and then aspired to be admitted a baron of the higher house of parliament, and lastly, to contend with Hugh Oldham, bishop of Exon. Which Oldham dying—*pendente lite*—was excommunicated, whereby his executors were forced to sue to the court of Rome for a dispensation from the pope ere he might be buried."—RISDON'S *Survey of Devon*, p. 212.

The visiter at Tavistock especially, if he be a friend to the diffusion of knowledge, should also be aware of the following facts, as they are recorded by a modern writer: "An institution for the study of Saxon literature existed in Tavistock at a very early period, and lectures were read in that language in a building purposely appropriated, and called the Saxon School. These lectures were discontinued about the period of the Reformation; and though they are reported to have been recommenced in the reign of Charles the First, the evidence to the circumstance is by no means satisfactory. Several of the Abbots were learned men; and the encouragement they gave to literature is evident, by the establishment of a printing-press in the Abbey, within a few years of the time when the art was brought into England. Among the books that issued from this press was Walton's Translation of *Boetius de Consolatione*, 'emprented in the exempte Monastery of Tavestoke in Denshyre, by me Dan Thomas Rychard, monke of the said Monastery,' 1525, quarto; and the 'Confirmation of the Tynners Charter,' twenty-sixth of Henry the Eighth; sixteen leaves quarto. Bishop Gibson also mentions a Saxon Grammar as having been printed here about the commencement of the Civil Wars; but this assertion is supposed by other antiquaries to be unfounded."—*Beauties of England and Wales*, Vol. iv. p. 220.

I venture to add another extract explanatory of the changes which ensued.—"The riches of the Abbots continuing to increase, their pride seems to have proportionably augmented; and Richard Barham, the thirty-fifth Abbot, procured from Henry the Eighth the privilege of sitting in the house of Peers; or, in other words, was mitred; probably, says Browne Willis, by purchase, in order to be revenged on Hugh Oldham, Bishop of Exeter, with whom he had great disputes, and at length occasioned him to be excommunicated. The patent by which this Abbot was honoured with a mitre is dated the twenty-third of January, 1513; but the privilege continued only till the year 1539, when John Peryn, the thirty-sixth and last Abbot, surrendered his monastery, and had the annual salary of £100. settled on him for life. The same year the possession of the Abbey, with the borough and town of Tavistock, were given by the King to John, Lord Russel."—Ibid., Vol. iv. p. 218.

twenty-six yards in length; the extensive cloisters, the magnificent chapter-house, have long been completely demolished. In the year 1736, the ruins of the latter were removed, and a neat house erected on its site for the residence of the Duke of Bedford's steward. Near this interesting spot are the parish church, dedicated to St. Eustachius, and the principal inn, whose stables bear traces of very ancient architecture; and here the three principal streets of the town now meet. It is remarkable that, amidst all the alterations and innovations which have been made during a hundred and forty years, the humble society of Dissenters have been allowed, unmolested, to retain their quiet sanctuary. While some of the monastic apartments have been converted to warehouses, and other spots still more sacred to devout meditation have become the scenes of worldly bustle and anxiety, the old hall has remained to be the sabbath-home of humble and contrite worshipers, the suppliant children of one Father—God,—the grateful disciples of one Master —Jesus Christ!

The succession of ministers in this interesting building is easily traced by means of the register of baptisms. Mr. Larkham lived only seven years after his ejectment. In this interval the feeling against him, as the champion of Nonconformity, was so strong, that he was threatened with imprisonment if he went beyond his house. His whole life was spent in resisting persecution. Soon after he quitted Jesus College, Cambridge, his puritanical

opinions involved him in a variety of vexatious suits; and he experienced, in quick succession, the tender mercies of the Star-Chamber, the High-Commission Court, the Consistory at Exeter, and other tribunals. The malice of some of his enemies followed him even after his death, and would have prevented his interment in the church; but the steward of the Earl of Bedford interposed, and he was buried in that part of the chancel which belonged to the house of Russell.*

After Mr. Larkham's death, Mr. Pearse, who had been ejected from the living of Dunsford, preached privately at Tavistock, and continued to do so till the Revolution, when he opened a Dissenting place of worship at Ashburton.† His successor was Mr. Henry Flamanck, another ejected minister,—a branch of an ancient and respectable Cornish family—a "very genteel man, of considerable learning, great natural abilities, a clear head, a strong memory, and lively affections."‡ The congregation at Tavistock during his ministry was large, and he laboured with great success till his death, which occurred in 1692.

The first minister at the Abbey Chapel educated by Dissenters was Mr. Jacob Sandercock. He came to Tavistock in 1688, and preached four years as Mr. Flamanck's assistant. It was in compliance with Mr. Flamanck's recommendation on his death-bed, that Mr. Sandercock was appointed his succes-

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 407. † Ibid. p. 357.
‡ Ibid. p. 278.

sor. The latter gentleman was particularly noted for sustaining the dignity of his office, but he also secured the affection of his hearers, and largely promoted the cause of the Dissenters. He died in 1729, and was succeeded by Mr. Peter Jillard, whose ministerial services were continued here eleven years. At this period the town abounded with poor persons, for whose welfare Mr. Jillard was unceasingly anxious,—not confining his efforts to the pulpit, but labouring in various ways on their behalf. In Dr. Gibbons's life of Dr. Watts,* there is a pleasing account of his benevolent efforts to establish a charity-school in Tavistock, our admiration of which efforts is increased by the circumstance that the parents of most of the children belonged to the Church of England, and were only desired to take them to *some* place of worship.

For three years after the removal of Mr. Jillard the society had no settled minister. In 1744, Mr. Merivale was ordained at Tavistock; he remained there till 1762, when he left to preside over the Dissenting College at Exeter. The next minister was Mr. Bernard Dowdell, who died in 1772, and was succeeded by Mr. Theophilus Edwards, afterwards the minister of the Mint Chapel, Exeter. On the departure of Mr. Edwards in 1794, the congregation elected Mr. William Evans, the present pastor, who kindly furnished many of the particulars in this sketch.

* Mentioned by Dr. Toulmin in his sermon on the death of Mr. Peter Jillard, son of the above-named minister. See supra, p. 172.

The history of the opinions of the society is thus faithfully stated by Mr. Evans: "During a whole century from the commencement of Protestant Dissent, the breeze of controversy was seldom or ever stirred by the voice of presbyter or deacon in Tavistock Abbey. Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy never thought of comparing notes, in flats or sharps, about their creeds; but, instead of 'searching the Scriptures daily,' dozed unanimously in the bed of sloth, like their forefathers of the mitre and crosier. The congregation was numerous till it was split into parties by difference of opinion, and another chapel was erected by the Calvinists. The Presbyterian, now surnamed Unitarian, society, has flourished with singular uniformity for more than forty years, sustained by the zeal of a few of its members and the concurrence of the common people."

In a turret of the edifice is a chapel library. A Sunday-school is also supported by the congregation. Thus do the well-informed of the present day employ the talents committed to *their* care. And thus is the belief in the animating doctrine of Providence confirmed and strengthened;—on the spot where an institution for the study of Saxon literature existed—where knowledge was imparted suited to the wants of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,—the little child and the intelligent youth now receive instruction equally adapted to their circumstances and the age in which they live.

Ministers.

Thomas Larkham, M.A.	1662—1669.
William Pearse	1669—1688.
Henry Flamanck	1688—1692.
Jacob Sandercock	1688—1729.
Peter Jillard	1730—1741.
Samuel Merivale.....	1744—1760.
Bernard Dowdell	1762—1772.
Theophilus Edwards	1772—1794.
William Evans.....	1794.

Jacob Sandercock was a native of Cornwall. His parents being in low circumstances, he was sent to a grammar-school by the kindness of a few friends. He received his education for the ministry in the Academy of Mr. Warren, at Taunton; and, when he had finished his studies, commenced preaching at Tiverton. In 1688, he removed to Tavistock to assist Mr. Flamanck, whom he eventually succeeded as pastor of the Abbey Congregation. Here he opened a school, notwithstanding the threats of Trelawny, Bishop of Exeter. This domineering prelate insisted on his applying for episcopal leave to instruct the rising generation. Sandercock, however, set him at defiance; and the Bishop, in a letter to a correspondent, expressed his determination to punish "that obstinate miscreant, the Presbyterian of Tavistock." But it does not appear that his power was, in this instance, equal to his will.

Mr. Sandercock's character is sketched by Mr. John Fox in the usual sarcastic style of that writer. While reading the following extract, the reader will not forget that Mr. Fox was prone to dwell upon the foibles rather than the virtues of his friends. At the same time it will be remembered that it is only

from such a writer the true state of Dissent at the period in question can be fully ascertained.

"He was one of those Dissenting ministers who believed the cause of the Separation to be the cause of God, and this made him sit the easier with his people, who were of the true old stamp, and who still retain the same stiff, uncharitable disposition to a wonder. They had for many years been trained by Mr. Flamanck, who was one of the ejected ministers after the Restoration, and Mr. Sandercock knew very well how to encourage and confirm their party notions, and to keep up that spirit, which is not to be found in any congregation of Dissenters in this part of the kingdom. To this it must be owing that they sat with such great complacency and patience under his ministry for so many years; for though he had clear notions as far as he went, and composed with judgment, yet he was the most dull, drowsy, disagreeable man in the pulpit I ever heard in my life. Though I do not remember to have heard any nonsense in his sermons and prayers, yet they were both delivered in a manner which was apt to lull every one to sleep. However, some amends was made for this; for though he was tedious, he was never long in his performances, either in the church or in the family, it being a very commendable maxim with him never to make religion a burden. His sermons, for the matter of them, were like the rest among Dissenters; he took great care to tell his people that he was one of Christ's ambassadors, and was vastly displeased at any thing said or done to deprive them of that respect or power which they were invested with and ought to have. I remember, while I lived with him, he preached a long time on the text, 'We, then, as ambassadors, in Christ's stead,' &c.; and though I was then very young, I could not but take notice how earnestly he inculcated the notion of ambassadorship upon his hearers, and that he took much pains to make them believe that what he said as such, from the pulpit, was not only the word of God, but an ordinance really and strictly appointed by Him. By this art these ministers in general maintained that respect which was paid them. His notions in other matters did not run so high. He was in opinion among those who at that time were called Baxterians, that is, such as rejected the notions of true Calvinists, but yet were terribly afraid of being called or thought Arminians. For the difference between them is not so great, had they the honesty or courage to speak out. He was a very zealous promoter of the Assembly held twice yearly at Exeter. He found great

emolument both to body and purse by giving his regular attendance. He had many presents and sums of money given him both from private people and the Fund, to both which he was constantly recommended by Mr. Walrond and some other leading ministers. I remember he once made a journey to London, where, by Mr. Walrond's recommendation, he cleared £100., besides all his expenses of going and coming. He was very often employed in reconciling family differences, in which he had very good success, for great deference was paid to his judgment by people of all denominations in the town. He was likewise very often consulted in politics; for he was able to direct the votes of most of his hearers in time of an election, and therefore was in high esteem with the old Sir Francis Drake, by whom he hath often provided for such of his friends as wanted places. He maintained his power and reputation to the end of his life, and was as much regarded and attended in the last stage of life as in the beginning." *

SAMUEL MERIVALE was born at Northampton, and educated for the ministry under Dr. Doddridge, whose academy he entered in 1734. One of his class-fellows was the excellent Mr. Orton, who describes him as "a most worthy, learned, and pious man." He settled first at Sleaford, in Lincolnshire, where he kept a grammar-school which was in great reputation. In this school Andrew Kippis received his preparatory education, and it was probably by Mr. Merivale's advice that he afterwards went to Northampton. In 1744, Mr. Merivale removed to Tavistock. Here he was ordained, and spent sixteen years with much honour and usefulness. His removal was occasioned by an invitation to undertake the office of Divinity Tutor in the New College at Exeter. He entered upon his duties here in 1760, his colleagues being Mr. Towgood and Mr. Turner. In 1770 Mr. Turner died, and was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Jervis, whose appointment excited the hopes of all the friends of the College. But in the following year Mr. Merivale died; and this event occasioned its dissolution.

* Mon. Repos., Vol. xvi. p. 258.

The subject of this memoir published a small volume, entitled "Daily Devotions for the Closet," which has passed through several editions. The last was published in 1829, with a preface by Dr. Carpenter, and the addition of several valuable prayers from various sources. It was a favourite work with Mr. Orton; Dr. Stonehouse calls it an admirable book,—perhaps the best [of the kind] ever written; he says, "it is far superior to Bishop Kenn's, being elegant, sensible, and devout." It is circulated by the Western Unitarian Society, as eminently calculated to aid their object—"the promotion of Christian knowledge and the practice of virtue."

Mr. Merivale's character was justly described by Mr. Bretland, one of the earliest pupils in the Exeter Academy. After mentioning the excellence of his conduct in domestic life, in discharging the duties of a Tutor, and in interesting and gratifying his friends, Mr. Bretland thus proceeds:

"As a member of society, to the most cordial love of all mankind he joined the most anxious concern for the welfare of his native country;—filled with the true spirit of a Briton and a Protestant, he manifested a warm and generous resentment at every attempt to lessen the civil or religious liberty of his country; and expressed the most ardent wishes for success to all schemes designed and well calculated to establish its just rights in due extent, and on a proper and lasting basis. As a Christian, he was such not from the prejudices of education or worldly views, but from conviction: he diligently studied, and well understood both the evidences and the principles of his religion. He entertained the most exalted conceptions of God; and his bosom glowed in consequence with fervent, manly piety. The system of Christianity which he adopted was far from the taint of dark superstition, or wild enthusiasm; and (rational and consistent in all its parts) it defied the attacks of infidelity. As a Dissenting minister, he adopted those truly Christian and Protestant principles which oppose all human claims and impositions in matters of religion as invasions of the inalienable prerogative of Jesus Christ. In the discharge of the duties of his ministerial character, he was invariably upright and assiduous. After he had entirely quitted the charge of a particular congregation, he engaged in the care of providing supplies for vacant

societies in his neighbourhood, and was eminently serviceable to them both by his assistance and advice. In short, sobriety in the government of himself; justice and charity in his behaviour to others; a sincere and warm devotion in his intercourse with God; an insatiable thirst for knowledge;—diligent and cheerful endeavours to improve the minds of youth; a warm and judicious zeal for the interests of virtue, truth, and liberty; and above all, an exemplification in his own practice of the duties he recommended, are the great outlines of that excellent character which has so lately been removed from our admiring view. Well may we suppose that, as far as the mind of this worthy person was concerned, his end was peaceful and serene. Accordingly, he smiled on the near approach of death, no doubt from the self-complacency of his own conscience, the enlivening hope of the Divine favour, and the delightful prospect of endless felicity. And, when this last enemy of nature gave the fatal stroke, it freed a soul from its mortal mansion to whose revered memory many have paid with me the tributary tear, and which I pray that you and I may meet again in a happier state of existence, where we may together for ever enjoy the love and favour of our indulgent Father and everlasting Friend." *

THEOPHILUS EDWARDS was a native of South Wales and born in the year 1750. He received his education for the ministry at Carmarthen, under tne Rev. Dr. Jenkins. In 1772, he succeeded Mr. Merivale at Tavistock, and remained there till the spring of 1794, when he became the pastor of the congregation at the Mint Meeting, Exeter. Some years before his death, he removed to Taunton for the purpose of enjoying the society and experiencing the affectionate attention of Dr. and Mrs. Davies,—the latter being his daughter. Mr. Edwards was highly respected for his talents and character; although visited with heavy afflictions, he invariably manifested the most profound resignation. He died at Taunton, Oct. 4, 1833, aged 83. An appropriate tribute to his memory appeared soon afterwards in the Christian Reformer. †

* Bretland's Sermons, Vol. ii. p. 35. † O. S., Vol. XIX. p. 552.

PLYMOUTH.

"PLYM christeneth that town which bears her noble name,
Upon the British coast what ship yet ever came,
That not of PLYMOUTH hears, where those brave navies lie,
From cannon's thund'ring flote, that all the world defy;
Which to invasive spoil when th' English list to draw,
Have check'd Hiberia's pride, and kept her still in awe,
Oft furnishing our dames with India's rare devices,
And lent us gold and pearl, with silk and dainty spices."

DRAYTON *(end of sixteenth century)*.

"It is not long since Plymouth was accounted a mean fishing town, untill the conveniency of the haven, which (without striking sail) admitteth into its bosom the tallest ships that be, where they ride safe, in either of the two rivers, to take the opportunity of the first wind. The commodious situation, and healthful habitation, was vulgarly known, and allured many to resort thither; whereby it is so increased with beautiful buildings, that of the two parts (formerly spoken) conjoined is made one populous Plymouth; and now so great grown, that it may be held comparable to some cities."—RISDON *(beginning of seventeenth century)*.

Plymouth is distant forty-four miles from Exeter, and two hundred and eighteen miles from London. In the lapse of two centuries a vast change has taken place in the town and vicinity of Plymouth; but the limits prescribed in this work forbid any attempt being made to give an adequate idea of its increased extent, opulence, and national importance. Since the period at which Risdon wrote, it is become one of the greatest naval arsenals in the kingdom."—EDITORS of RISDON'S *History* (1811).

Population in 1811,—20,803; in 1821,—21,591; in 1831,—31,080.

UNITARIAN CHAPEL.

FIVE ministers residing in, and nearly connected with, Plymouth, were silenced in the year 1662. The seed they had scattered was watched and watered, not only by themselves, during the intervals of their exiles and imprisonments, but also by several of their brethren from other parts of the county, and abundant proofs were offered that their labours were followed by the Divine blessing. The ministers mentioned under the head of Plymouth in the Nonconformists' Memorial, are Mr. George Hughes, Vicar of St. Andrew's; Mr. Obadiah Hughes, his son, then studying at Oxford; Mr. Thomas Martyn, Lecturer at St. Andrew's; Mr. Samuel Martyn, his son, an occasional preacher; and Mr. John Horseman, ejected at Scilly Island, but well known at Plymouth.*

Of these five ministers, one only was able to discharge the duties of the ministry at Plymouth for any length of time. This was Mr. Thomas Martyn, and he also was sent from the town soon after his ejectment, and frequently interrupted when, at length, he found opportunities of preaching. The magis-

* Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 387.

trates of the neighbourhood, dreading the influence of the ejected pastors where they were generally beloved, sent him with Mr. Hughes, Sen., who may be considered the founder of the present society, to the island of St. Nicholas under a guard of two files of musqueteers. There they remained nine months; they were liberated on condition that Mr. Hughes should give security of £2000., and Mr. Martyn of £1000., not to live within twenty miles of Plymouth without leave of the Earl of Bath or his deputy. Mr. Hughes then retired to Kingsbridge, but the hardships of his banishment and his separation from his flock impaired his health; and at the end of four years, chiefly spent in devotional exercises and serious discourse, he died. His friend and fellow-sufferer survived him many years, and obtained permission to appear once more among his people; but during his absence his trials were of the severest kind; at St. Nicholas he was deprived of the society of his wife and children; a dangerous sickness prevailed among the soldiers, and he entreated in vain to be removed; and, subsequently, while he was bound not to live within twenty miles of Plymouth, though often wanted to advise, relieve, and comfort his family in sickness and death, he dared not go near them.

The evidence relating to the early history of the Unitarian society is somewhat contradictory. It appears, at first sight, to favour the opinion that Mr. Nicholas Sherwill, another ejected minister, was the founder of their church. Their register of

baptisms was commenced by Mr. Sherwill only three months after the memorable Bartholomew Day, and continued by him till March 23, 1686. Then follows a blank of a page and a half; and the register was afterwards brought down, apparently in the same writing, and without any other minister's name, to August 20, 1697. However, the statements of several writers, especially Mr. Wilson, lead to the conclusion that Sherwill was the more immediate founder of the church since called Independent, and Hughes of the present Unitarian society. The possession of Sherwill's register by the latter may be accounted for by the fact that, at the close of the seventeenth century, there was in many towns a community both of Dissenting ministers and Dissenting records. I have inserted a few names on my list, particularly Nathaniel Jacob, because, though chiefly connected with the other congregation, such ministers preached occasionally to both, till the settlement of Mr. Harding. That this gentleman presided over the society in question, is evident from the inscription on its communion cups:

"Bought by and for the use of that Church in Plymouth of which Nathaniel Harding is Pastor, 1705."

The records in possession of the Unitarian minister afford much information. Mr. Sherwill's register embraces, with one short omission, the generally obscure period from 1662 to 1697. About half of these baptisms are expressly said to have been "in

private," but a great number of them are recorded as having been performed at "the Old Marshall's," a locality now unknown. In the same book is a list of baptisms "by Mr. Thomas Martyn," begin- June 12, 1672, (perhaps earlier, as a leaf seems to have been torn out,) continued by him to August 6, 1673, and brought down, apparently by another minister, to February 3, 1674-5. It further appears from the following memorandum, after one of Mr. Martyn's entries, that there were two houses in which the Plymouth pastors met their flocks; "All those before mentioned weare baptised at Greene house near Charles Church, in Greene Streett." The circumstance that several ministers, preaching or discharging pastoral duties in different places, recorded their proceedings in the same book, indicates that they, as well as the people entrusted to their care, were "*one*,"—that they realized the happy union which the Saviour so earnestly prayed might exist among his followers, and which their sufferings for conscience' sake especially led them to promote. The attachment to Mr. Sherwill and the conviction of the permanent validity of his episcopal ordination were so strong, that several persons were married by him, though he was avowedly a Nonconformist. In the church book are the following entries:

Marryed by mee Nicholas Sherwill.

1662. Sept. 17. Mr. Walter Trowt and Mrs. Katherine Crampron at Stonehouse.

1663.
July 15. Matthew Greet and Ruth Kingston at Brixton.

1670.
May 3. Mr. Abraham Sherwill and Mrs. Joanna Fortescue of Sprindleston at Plympton Morris.

With respect to the meeting-house in which Mr. Harding and his successors officiated, there is no evidence of the time of its erection; but the accounts of the number, respectability, and earnestness of the early Nonconformists at Plymouth, lead us to suppose that they built a place of worship as soon as possible. The date of the edifice raised in Batter Street for Mr. Enty and his congregation, afterwards called Independent, is 1708. In 1715, Mr. Harding had seven hundred and sixty hearers, and for a long time this church and that assembling in Batter Street included almost all the influential citizens, merchants, and manufacturers of the town.*

Mr. Enty was noted for his "orthodoxy," which he frequently manifested in the Exeter Controversy. On the expulsion of Mr. Peirce he was one of those chosen to succeed him, and his own place was filled by Mr. Baron, his assistant. The prominent part taken by Enty at this period, the zeal with which he inculcated the Trinity and its kindred doctrines, and the great influence he possessed over his hearers, tend to account for the circumstance that, in after years, *his* congregation remained orthodox, while the other gradually adopted Unitarianism. Harding as well as Enty took an active part in the

* Worsley's Lectures on Nonconformity, 2nd ed., p. 343.

exclusive proceedings of the Exeter Assembly, but the latter was by far the more violent; both refused, for a long time, to invite Fox, a reputed heretic, to their pulpits, but at length Harding asked him indirectly. The father of Fox was a member of Harding's church, and had imbibed a large share of that zeal for Dissent and reverence for Dissenting Ministers which were then so common.* It was the great object of his ambition to see his son a member of the Exeter Assembly, or to hear him haranguing some large congregation in the West. He sent him first to Tavistock School, then to an old Mr. Bedford at Plymouth, next to Mr. Hallet's Academy at Exeter, and, lastly, with the hope of

* Several instances are mentioned by Mr. Fox. In reference to his going to Mr. Hallet's, he says, "I was about fifteen years of age. Mr. Harding and son went with us, which my father took to be so great an honour, that he defrayed all their expenses upon the road." Mr. Hallet encouraged this kind of feeling. "He had high notions of the ministerial power, and thought that it was derived from the Apostles, who had their commission from Christ; so that his opinion was, that Christ had granted a charter (that was his word) by virtue of which all ministers had power to rule and act in the church, as such, at all times and upon all occasions." And in perfect accordance with these notions was the reception of Dr. Calamy in 1713. "During his stay in the West he was to come to Plymouth. As I was designed for London, my father thought it could not be amiss to shew him some respect, so he sent him an invitation by Mr. Enty to lodge with him. I went as far as Newton to meet him, where he was treated nobly and far beyond what the Doctor expected from a country brother. He moved by slow degrees to Torbay, Dartmouth, Shilston, and thence to Plymouth, where he took up his lodgings at the great inn for all Dissenting ministers, which was at Mrs. Pinson's."—Mon. Repos., Vol. xvi. p. 134.

In the course of this journey, Dr. Calamy preached at Salisbury, Dorchester, Exeter, Plymouth, Liskeard, Tiverton, Taunton, and Bath. "I never went a journey," he says, "in which I worked harder or fared better than in this."—Calamy's *Historical Account of his own Life*, Rutt's Ed., Vol. ii. p. 266.

making him thoroughly orthodox, to London. But the good man's hopes were destroyed by the circumstance that his son, though shrewd, intelligent, well acquainted with the world, and by no means indifferent to the approbation of his father and the religious public, yet persisted in thinking and acting for himself. While at Mr. Hallet's, he "and five or six others fell into the Unitarian scheme about the Trinity," which being spread abroad, (and it deserves to be noticed here as the origin of the celebrated controversy in the West,) he was prevented for some time from obtaining a licence to preach. Meanwhile, his father, distressed at the prospect of the failure of his scheme, employed various means to remove the young man's difficulties—his dread of an examination by the Assembly, occasioned by the spiritual tyranny of that body—and his objection to sign the Thirty-nine Articles, at that time, in many cases, an indispensable ceremony. At length, without sacrificing his principles, he received a certificate to signify that he was a licensed candidate by order of the Assembly, upon which the old gentleman was gratified by hearing him preach several times at Plymouth; but so sickened was the son by the prevailing spirit of the age, that he soon after quitted the ministry, and lived upon his private resources.*

* "In the very next Assembly after this (he says, in reference to the short-lived gratification he was able to afford his father), Mr. Peirce's affair came to a crisis. The orthodox made a public declaration of their faith in the Trinity, agreeably to the Articles and Creeds of the Church of England and to the Assembly's Catechism; and every body believed them. Mr. Peirce and his friends hastily set their names to a paper, in which

For some years there was but little improvement in the spirit of the Plymouth Nonconformists. Though Harding was less violent than Enty, there was no difference in the sentiments of the two congregations during the lives of those ministers. Harding had at different times three assistants;—two were Henry Brett and Joseph Cock,* whose peculiar opinions are unknown; the other, Henry Moore, originally an Arian, but towards the close of his life an Unitarian. Moore removed from Southmolton in 1731, to assist Harding, at whose death, in 1744, he became pastor of the congregation. His appointment was not without opposition, chiefly caused by one leading member of the congregation who was a great favourer of Mr. Whitfield; but the discontented party, finding themselves in the minority, withdrew, and joined the church in Batter Street. Mr. Moore "happening to be on the unpopular side of the question, there were those who (even after the secession) did not fail to give him great uneasiness, especially by attempting to prejudice his people against him,

they declared they were no Arians, and that they believed the Scriptures, for which almost every body laughed at them, and said that they in a manner confessed the Assembly's charge, and assured the world of it under their own hands. I, unluckily for my private interest, happened to be one of the brave fellows that signed it, the consequence of which was, that there was scarce any for me to preach to besides the poor remains of a few broken congregations, who had good nature and charity enough to stand by their ministers, whose reputation, interest, and usefulness were absolutely ruined by the rage, aspersions, and violence of the other party. And thus ended my short warfare among the paltry, spiritual wickednesses with whom it was my ill luck to be concerned."

* Mr. Wilson's MSS.

in which they were but too successful."* By these means his flock was reduced, before he died, to a very small number; but soon afterwards a division took place at Batter Street, because the majority would not consent to appoint Mr. Hanmer, who had been the assistant of their former minister, to fill the office of pastor; and the liberal party was increased by the addition of Hanmer and his friends. This circumstance occurred in 1762, the first year of the ministry of Mr. Reynell. Hanmer preached for him occasionally, and baptized many children; but there is no evidence of his having received a salary as stated minister. Before this division, the two congregations which had long been known by the common appellation—Presbyterian—were on friendly terms, and belonged to the same Assembly at Exeter.

The successors of Mr. Reynell were Mr. Watson, Mr. Porter, Mr. Kentish, Dr. Jones, Mr. Tingcombe, Mr. Jones, Mr. Worsley, and Mr. Odgers,—all decided Unitarians. During the ministry of these gentlemen, the society, though not numerous, has included many intelligent and truly respectable inhabitants of the town. With two exceptions, (Dr. Jones and Mr. Jones, of whom memoirs will be given in the usual place,) the ministers just mentioned are still living. Mr, Watson removed to Chichester in 1788, officiated there till 1803, and has since resided at Bath. Mr. Porter continued at Plymouth till 1794, afterwards preached for some time in the

* English Presbyterian, p. 180.

neighbouring chapel at Plymouth Dock, now Devonport, and subsequently went to America. He engaged in a controversy with Dr. Hawker, which came before the public; and he compiled the Liturgy which was introduced during his ministry and is still used. Mr. Kentish quitted Plymouth for Birmingham in 1795, where, to the present time, he has filled the office of one of the pastors of the large society at the New Meeting.* Dr. Jones was Mr. Kentish's successor, and remained here till 1798, when he was followed by Mr. Tingcombe, who, at the end of eight years, removed to Bridgwater, and afterwards from thence to Frenchay. The congregation were then supplied for a few months by Mr. John Rudd. In 1807, Mr. Jones came, and found the chapel thinly attended; but his exertions were followed by a considerable improvement. On the death of this gentleman, Mr. Worsley removed to Plymouth; and, after labouring here eighteen years, went to Paris with the hope of forming a Unitarian society there; not succeeding to the necessary extent, he soon returned to England and accepted an invitation from his former flock at Lincoln.

A new era in the history of the congregation now commenced. The old chapel, being ruinous and inconvenient, was taken down, and a new one

* Of Mr. Kentish's unwearied labours in *one* of his fields of Christian usefulness, my readers may form some idea from a list of his writings, twenty-seven in number, subjoined to a short memoir in an interesting "*Sketch of the History of Presbyterian Nonconformity in Birmingham, by the Rev. John Reynell Wreford.*"

erected on the same site. This is a substantial edifice, with a plain exterior, but neatly fitted up and capable of accommodating five hundred persons. Soon after it was finished, the congregation unanimously elected as their pastor, Mr. W. Odgers, then pursuing his studies at the London University, under the direction of his Theological Tutor, the Rev. B. Mardon. The new chapel was opened on Sunday, May 13th, 1832. In the morning, Mr. Evans, of Tavistock, read the liturgy and delivered an address, and Mr. Acton, of Exeter, preached; in the evening Mr. Odgers conducted the whole service. The congregation assembling under these favourable auspices were also gratified by the presence of the Unitarian society at Devonport, whose chapel was purposely closed on that day. Most cheering has been the subsequent progress of the Plymouth Unitarians. Their number has been greatly multiplied, and all their recent proceedings prove that they are influenced by a spirit which will not speedily decay,—a spirit which sustains itself, and acquires increasing strength, by promoting the spread of truth, and piety, and benevolence—*a spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind.*

The following institutions are supported by the society:

FELLOWSHIP FUND. Commenced in 1817, and very well supported. Objects, "to assist in building places of worship, defraying the expenses of travelling ministers, promoting plans of education for ministers, and other exertions for diffusing the truths of the Gospel."

CHAPEL LIBRARY. Founded in 1825. Contains about three hundred volumes, of which there is a printed catalogue. The following publications are regularly circulated among the subscribers: — The Christian Reformer, Unitarian Chronicle, Monthly Repository, Christian Pioneer, Christian Advocate, and Christian Teacher.

CONGREGATIONAL TRACT SOCIETY. Formed in February, 1833, for the purpose of promoting habits of reading and thinking in reference more particularly to the doctrines of Christianity. Two ladies attend regularly in the School Room after each of the Sunday services, to deliver tracts to any of the congregation who are disposed to read them,—a part of the plan which has proved very useful. They have also another Tract Society, the members of which engage to take tracts to persons living in their respective districts who may be willing to read them, though not belonging to the congregation.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL. Established in March, 1833. Confined hitherto to girls. Number at first limited to twenty, but afterwards extended to forty. Connected with this institution are a School Library and a Writing School. Both are found to be valuable auxiliaries. The Writing School is conducted every Saturday afternoon by two of the Sunday teachers, who also, at the same time, instruct the children in the rudiments of arithmetic. This part of the plan is found to induce the scholars to seek improvement at home.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL SAVINGS' FUND. Established in January, 1834, to encourage habits of economy and forethought among the children, and thus prepare them for the prudent performance of the duties of life. Each child is encouraged to bring a sum not exceding two-pence weekly, which, having accumulated, is returned in some form to the parents or children at the end of the year, with a premium of two-pence on every shilling. In the first year the deposits amounted to more than £8. The money to be laid out for the benefit of the children, or no premium to be given.

Ministers.

George Hughes, B.D.....	1662—
Thomas Martyn	1662—1673.
Samuel Martyn	
Nathaniel Jacob	1673—1690.
Nathaniel Harding	1690—1744.
Henry Brett	1707—1723.
Joseph Cock.....	1721—1731.
Henry Moore	1731--1762.
John Reynell	1762—1784.
Thomas Watson	1785—1788.
Thomas Porter	1789—1794.
John Kentish	1794—1795.
John Jones, LL. D.....	1795—1798.
John Tingcombe	1798—1806.
John Jones.....	1807—1812.
Israel Worsley	1813—1831.
William Odgers	1832.

George Hughes, B. D.—Born at Southwark.—Educated at Oxford.—Ordained in 1628.—Preached first in and about Oxford.—Afterwards Lecturer of Allhallows, Bread Street, London.—Silenced by Archbishop Laud, at an early period, for Nonconformity to some ceremonies.—Presented by the Earl of Bedford, to the living of Tavistock, where he did much good.—Obliged by the Civil War to remove to Coventry and live with his wife's relations.—Soon sent for by "the government of Plymouth," and presented to St. Andrews in that town, 1644.—Found the Liturgy had been omitted by his predecessor, and willingly followed his example.—Very generous to the Puritan ministers who took refuge in Plymouth, and much respected by

all parties for his learning, piety, and general usefulness.—Ejected in 1662.—Soon afterwards sent to St. Nicholas Island on account of his Nonconformity, and subsequently removed to Kingsbridge, where, in 1667, he proved by his death as he had done by his life, that he was a Christian indeed.—Continued preaching privately to the last, and confessed that he "was not ashamed to live nor afraid to die." *

NATHANIEL JACOB was the son of a major in the Parliament army. He designed his son for the ministry from the cradle, if it should please God to qualify him for it. At fifteen years of age, the youth, being well furnished with grammar-learning, went to Oxford, and at twenty-three he was ordained by the classical Presbytery of Sarum. He was ejected from Ugborough, where his learning, exemplary piety, and obliging behaviour, had much endeared him to the people, particularly to several gentlemen of good fortune and character. After his ejectment, he rode to Plymouth once a fortnight to preach to Mr. Martyn's people, (a branch of the Nonconformist church,) and at his death became their pastor. About the year 1684, he was convicted under the act against conventicles, and committed to Exeter gaol for six months. Still he lived on good terms with several worthy clergymen in the neighbourhood, and when the Five-mile Act drove him from Plymouth, Mr. Nosworthy, of Dipford, gave him shelter in his parish. Afterwards, liberty being granted, he returned to the public exercise of his ministry to a numerous congregation. His labours were crowned with great success. Canon Gilbert, vicar of St. Andrews, preached his funeral sermon and gave him a great character for piety and learning. †

* Noncon. Mem., p. 387. See a Latin inscription composed by the son-in-law of Mr. Hughes—Mr. John Howe.

† Noncon. Mem., Vol. i. p. 422.

NATHANIEL HARDING.—The fullest account of Mr. Harding's life is found among the biographical sketches by Mr. Fox, of Plymouth. Part of that account I shall introduce here; venturing to omit a few passages not necessary to my purpose. Of Mr. Fox's tendency to be severe I have already reminded my readers.

"Mr. Harding was born in Ireland. His father was a Dissenting minister in that kingdom, and called Nicodemus. From the quaintness of the name and the notions and disposition which his son brought to England, I apprehend he was of the Puritan kind. It was by accident (as I have heard) that young Harding came to Plymouth. He went on board a ship in Ireland to see some friends who had embarked for England. While he was there, the wind sprung up fresh and fair, and he was persuaded by his friends to take the tour with them. On arriving at Plymouth, he found that a large congregation of Dissenters had, some time before, lost their minister. He was desired to preach to them, which he did to such good purpose that the people immediately fell in love with him and elected him their pastor. In Ireland, he had been under the tuition of one Dr. Carr, who had the character of a proud, sour man, and of a very good Grecian. Where he studied I can't say; 'tis certain, he settled very young at Plymouth, and brought all his notions in divinity with him, which he notably retained and vindicated to the last. I sat myself under his ministry, many years, and the general run of his preaching was upon the darling mysteries of Christianity, and upon such things as Election, Adoption, Sanctification, &c.; and I never understood that he entered at any time on any other method of preaching. His behaviour in the pulpit was very suitable to his way of thinking; for he made a most monstrous disagreeable noise, especially when he grew angry, as he often did, if he happened to be confuting any opinions he did not like. I can remember myself, that he was once very near throwing a quarto Bible upon the head of the minister who sat in the desk under him. At another time, he with much difficulty recovered his wig, which he had almost jerked from his head by the violent agitation of his body at an argument he was offering against Dr. Clarke. He was much more disagreeable in prayer. Not that he was at a loss, or guilty of

of tautology, for he composed his prayers and learnt them by heart as he did his sermons. But then he had so strange an utterance, especially in the beginning of his prayer, that persons not used to him could seldom understand him. He had always the art of keeping great authority over his hearers; the external sanctity which he carried about with him, gained him universal respect. His conversation generally turned on spiritual things, or on some disputed point in divinity, and if any indifferent things were talked of, he seemed always uneasy, was constantly sighing, and lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven. But all his knowledge and piety never got the better of his natural temper; for he was naturally proud, and impatient of contradiction, and governed with great haughtiness and tyranny in his family. The menaces he gave his only son on his falling into the Unitarian scheme, and his driving him out of the kingdom, will be always a standing proof of his furious bigotry, and the barbarity of his temper. Yet after all these imperfections, which perhaps he never knew or considered as such, it must be allowed that he was a man of singular piety towards God. His heart was certainly in his work, and I believe he thought it was his duty to live in that retired and abstracted manner which he always delighted in. Upon the whole, considering his education, principles, and professions, he discharged his duty faithfully, gave an excellent example to his brethren of the separation, and with all his infirmities and mistakes, lived and died an honest man."*

HENRY MOORE, of Liskeard.—I omit a separate memoir of Mr. Moore, of Plymouth, because his life was not marked by circumstances of peculiar interest. But the reader will not object to the introduction of a few particulars of the life of his son,—derived chiefly from Dr. Aikin's preface to the posthumous volume of Mr. Moore's Lyrical and Miscellaneous Poems.

HENRY MOORE was born, in 1732, at Plymouth. His father, a man of extensive learning and merits, was a Dissenting minister. His mother was the daughter of William Bellew, Esq., of Stockleigh Court in the same county. He received his grammar education under Mr. Bedford, afterwards vicar of Charles parish, in Plymouth. In 1749, he was entered at Dr.

* Mon. Rep., Vol. xvi. p. 257.

Doddridge's Academy, at Northampton, of which he was a member at the time of his tutor's decease. On this occasion, Mr. Moore paid a tribute of respect and veneration in a poem to the memory of Dr. Doddridge, which was afterwards published with many unwarrantable alterations. The poem was dedicated to Mrs. Doddridge, and was justly admired as a tribute of elegant fancy and warm affection. He finished his academical course under Dr. Ashworth; and in 1755 or 1756, was elected minister to a congregation at Dulverton. In 1757, he removed to Modbury, where he continued till his final removal to Liskeard, which took place in 1788. During these long periods, he was almost lost from the notice of the world; recollected, perhaps, by some of his fellow-students as a youth of promise; known by a few brother-ministers as a man of learning and critical talents; but scarcely recognised for that cultivated genius which fitted him for shining in the highest ranks of literature.

He so far overcame his diffidence, as to contribute largely to the two volumes of commentaries and essays, published by the Society for promoting the knowledge of the Scriptures.* These pieces obtained for the author the character of a very learned, ingenious, and useful critic, from such judges as Dr. Geddes, and Michael Dodson, Esq. Mr. Moore was the author of an anonymous letter, in which the doctrines of Mr. Madan's Thelypthora are attacked with much humour and vivacity. At the solicitation of his nephew, who was a very intelligent surgeon at Plymouth, he printed, in 1795, a short poem entitled Private Life, a Moral Rhapsody. This, though a performance of much poetical and sentimental beauty, yet appearing from a country press, with no advantages of publication, attracted little notice. During the last summer of his life, Mr. Moore put into the hands of his nephew, a volume of MS. poems which, with singular modesty, he requested him to shew to some person who could judge of their fitness for the public eye.

* A list of Mr. Moore's contributions may be found in Dr. Aikin's preface.

"I was applied to on the occasion," (says Dr Aikin in concluding the preface,) "and I trust the readers of these pieces will be convinced that I could not hesitate in giving a decided opinion in their favour. In reality, I scarcely ever experienced a greater and more agreeable surprise, than on the discovery of so rich a mine of poetry, where I had not the least intimation of its existence. That the author should have passed seventy years of life almost totally unknown, was a circumstance that excited the interest of all to whom the poems were communicated; and we were impatient that, however late, he should enjoy those rewards of merit which had so long been withheld. In the mean time, he was attacked with a severe stroke of the palsy, which, while it left his intellects free, incapacitated him for every exertion. There was now no time to be lost. My offer of taking upon myself the whole care of the editorship was thankfully accepted; and a subscription was set on foot, which met with the warm support of many who were desirous that all possible comfort should be supplied to cheer the helpless decline of such a man. But the progress of debility anticipated these well intended efforts. He sunk tranquilly under his disease on Nov. 2, 1802; having, however, lived to enjoy some satisfaction from the knowledge that there were persons whom he had never seen, who could regard him with cordial esteem and friendship. As he lived in celibacy, and had no dependent relatives, no other object remained for a subscription than that of bringing forward his posthumous work in an advantageous manner secure both from loss and neglect."

Those who are so fortunate as to possess this volume, will cordially assent to the estimate, formed by the accomplished editor, of the literary rank of Mr. Moore. Many who are only acquainted with the hymns by the subject of this memoir in various Unitarian selections, will gratefully acknowledge his claims to their admiration. If he had only written, those beginning with the lines, "My God thy boundless love I praise," "Soft are the fruitful showers that bring," "Supreme and universal light," he would have furnished food for the piety of thousands. Of his personal qualities—his mild and gentle manners, his humility, contentment, and thankfulness, there is a beautiful description in the memoir by Dr. Aikin, and the fol-

lowing extracts from the volume of poems derive their greatest charm from the circumstance, that the sentiments they express are in perfect unison with those by which the heart and life of the author were habitually influenced.

"Rejoicing in the good his hands bestow,
Th' Almighty Father looks well pleas'd below,
But chief his fav'rite work to see,
The pious, grateful, social soul,
Where, tun'd to nature's harmony,
The softest, sweetest passions roll;
That throbs in sympathy with woe,
That flames with friendship's holy glow,
That swells with wishes unconfin'd
To scatter blessings o'er mankind,
And, in divine resembling lines imprest,
Loves his own image in the gen'rous breast."—p. 5.

"But mark, where poor, unnotic'd or unknown,
Neglected virtue smiles at fortune's frown;
Or blest by fortune in a private state,
By worth ennobled and by goodness great;
Bright on whose gen'rous breast those splendours glow,
Of sacred honour, kings could ne'er bestow;
The *friend of man!* who can in life confess
No joy worth living, but the joy to bless."—p. 153.

"O Resignation! Faith's soft soothing child;
Come with thy words—thy looks—divinely mild:
Woe's wild emotions lull to gentle rest;
Pour holy balm into the bleeding breast;
Be ev'ry passion, ev'ry murmur, still,
And bend the struggling soul to Heav'n's high will."—p. 106.

Since compiling the above imperfect notice, I have been favoured with a selection of Mr. Moore's hymns in his own handwriting and entrusted by him to the respected friend from whom I received it. The following effusion has not, I believe, been published:

"As on the swiftly-gliding stream
A thousand sunbeams play,
Successive give a transient gleam,
And quickly glance away;

So on our eyes with rapid glare
A thousand pleasures float;
Ere we have time to say "they are,"—
They vanish, and "are not."

Unnumbered joys, illusive, vain,
Our eager wishes cheat;
Yet are we still allur'd again,
Nor will suspect deceit.

From scheme to scheme we wildly fly,
Nor let our passions rest:
Then grieve, and weep, and wonder why
We cannot yet be blest.

The world let pride and folly share,
It never was design'd
To be the pleasure, or the care,
Of an immortal mind.

To joys more lasting and sublime
The Christian's faith aspires;
No bliss within the bounds of time
Can fill his vast desires.

To thee, my God! my wishes tend;
In thee completely blest;
My present hope! my final end!
And my eternal rest!"

The Rev. JOHN REYNELL was descended from a very ancient and distinguished family which had been seated in Devonshire for about four centuries, at Ogwell-house, near Newton-Bushel, the present representative of which is Major General Sir Thomas Reynell, Baronet. Mr. Reynell was born at Newton-Abbot, in the county of Devon, October 30th, 1736.

In the year 1755, he was placed in the Academical Institution at Daventry, then under the superintendence of Dr. Ashworth. In this Institution, when under the charge of Dr. Doddridge at Northampton, his uncle and early instructor, the Rev. John Reynell, of Totness, had received his education; and at Daventry, at a subsequent period, under Mr. Belsham, his son the Rev. Thomas Reynell, of Crediton, was educated.—That branch of the family from which the subject of this memoir more immediately descended, had joined the Nonconformists soon after the passing of the Act of Uniformity. Mr. Reynell left Daventry in the year 1760, and in 1762, he settled as pastor of the congregation at Plymouth. In this office he continued until 1784, when, in consequence of his coming into the possession of an estate at Thorverton, near Exeter, he removed to that delightful village, where he officiated to a small Presbyterian congregation, and continued to reside until his death, which took place in September, 1800. Soon after his settlement at Plymouth, he married Mary, the only surviving child of Edward Richards, Esq., of Upex, near Exeter, by whom he left seven sons and two daughters. Mrs. Reynell died in 1789.

Though the name of this admirable man is not extensively known, few persons have passed through life more honoured and beloved than he did. While at Plymouth and engaged in the more active duties of his profession, he secured the veneration and regard of his flock, by the courteousness of his deportment, the warmth of his benevolence, and the amiability of his temper, as well as by the piety, earnestness, and sound practical sense by which his preaching was distinguished. He was unfriendly to controversy, and seldom dwelt upon speculative points of theology. His heart overflowed with kindness to the whole race of man, and he was ardently desirous of promoting a friendly disposition among Christians of all denominations.

At Thorverton, Mr. Reynell occupied precisely the situation which the Author of his nature seemed to have fitted him to improve and adorn. In that retired and rural village, he lived happy in himself and dispensing happiness to all around him.

Encircled by a numerous and affectionate family,—placed in easy and even affluent circumstances,—and anxious to contribute to the comfort of every one who came within the sphere of his influence, he had it in his heart—and in his power also—to be a blessing to the neighbourhood to which Providence had conducted him—and a blessing to the neighbourhood in truth he was. By his kind offices to the poor, by his affectionate attentions to their temporal as well as to their spiritual necessities, he was at once a complete model of a village pastor, the friend, the comforter, the guide of all. His house was the scene of hospitality and of domestic bliss. His brethren in the ministry and all who enjoyed his friendship or acquaintance were ever received by him with a cordial and courteous welcome, and were made happy in the feeling that they shared the regard of one of the excellent of the earth. He was fond of rural pursuits and recreations, as well as of his books—of society, as well as of his own fire-side. It was there, in the bosom of his happy family, that he sought and found his purest earthly felicity. By them, he was beloved and revered in no ordinary degree while he lived; and after his death, by none of them could his name be ever pronounced without emotion. The dignified and manly beauty of his person—the urbanity of his manners—the simplicity, uprightness, and benevolence of his character, are still remembered with affectionate and admiring regret by many to whom his memory will be always precious—nor can the influence of such a character ever altogether cease.

Thus in the possession of every source of earthly enjoyment and going about continually doing good, the life of this excellent man passed happily and usefully away; and when he died, the tears of the whole village accompanied him to the grave, where he was again united to the gentle partner of his days—and where "side by side they sleep beneath the village tower." *

* Communicated by the Rev. J. R. Wreford, of Birmingham.

Dr. JOHN JONES.—This accomplished scholar and voluminous writer, was born at Landingate, in the county of Carmarthen. His father was a respectable farmer; and the son had been destined for agricultural pursuits, till it was discovered that he had neither taste nor inclination for such occupations. From his earliest childhood he had evinced an unusual predilection for books. It was his frequent practice, immediately after breakfast, to disappear from the family circle, and retire to the banks of a secluded rivulet, about a mile from the house, and there pursue his studies till hunger compelled him to return. His memory was at this time remarkable for its strength and tenacity.

His father, finding that it would be vain to attempt to consign him to the drudgery of a farm, resolved to educate him for the Christian ministry. With this view he procured for him the best instruction in the elements of the Latin and Greek languages, which he could obtain in the country schools of the neighbourhood. He made the most of these slender advantages, and gradually imbibed an ardent desire to become a proficient in classical learning. About the age of fourteen or fifteen, he was sent to the College Grammar School at Brecon, one of the first classical seminaries in the Principality, always under the superintendence of a clergyman of the Established Church. Here he remained three years, when the death of his father, in 1783, obliged him to return home.

About this period, his neighbour and relation, Mr. David Jones, afterwards the colleague of Dr. Priestley, and known, in the controversy with Dr. Horsley, as the "Welsh Freeholder," was a student at the New College, Hackney. Through his recommendation, the managers of that institution admitted him a student on the foundation. Here he soon acquired the friendship and patronage of the late Dr. Abraham Rees, who had held the office of Resident Tutor. He remained at Hackney six years, enjoying, among other advantages, the enviable privilege

of the classical instruction of the late Gilbert Wakefield, with whom he was a favourite pupil.

In the year 1792, the death of the learned and excellent Mr. Thomas Lloyd having created a vacancy in the office of Classical and Mathematical Tutor in the Welsh Academy, then stationed at Swansea, Mr. Jones was appointed by the Presbyterian Board to be his successor. After he had held this office about three years, some unhappy differences arose between him and his colleague, the Rev. W. Howell, in which the students rashly embarked as partizans. The Board finding that there remained no prospect of an amicable adjustment of the disputes, and not wishing to side with either party in a matter which was entirely personal, adopted the resolution of dismissing both tutors, and removing the institution to Carmarthen. On quitting Swansea, Mr. Jones settled at Plymouth, as the pastor of the Unitarian congregation in that place. He remained here two years, when he accepted an invitation to Halifax, in Yorkshire. Here he resided for three years, joining to his ministerial labours the instruction of youth, an employment for which he was singularly well qualified. From Halifax he removed to London, where he continued till the end of his life. Not long after his settlement in London, he married the only daughter of his friend and former tutor, Dr. Rees. This lady died without issue in the year 1815. In 1817 he married Anna, the only daughter of the late George Dyer, Esq., of Sawbridgeworth, Herts, who, with two children, survived him.

After his removal to the metropolis, Mr. Jones occasionally preached for his brethren, but never had the charge of a congregation. Under some momentary feeling of disgust, never explained to his brethren, he destroyed all his manuscript sermons, and from this time never could be prevailed upon to appear in the pulpit. He still, however, adhered to his profession; was a member of the Presbyterian Body of London Dissenting Ministers, and for some years one of the clerical trustees of the estates and endowments of Dr. Daniel Williams. A few years before his death, the University of Aberdeen conferred upon

him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, and within a year or two of his death he was elected a member of the Royal Society of Literature.

Dr. Jones maintained a high reputation as a teacher of the classical languages. His instructions were for many years in great request among persons of rank and eminence; and he had to reckon in the number of his pupils some individuals of noble birth. He superintended, for a considerable time, the education of the sons of that distinguished lawyer and philanthropist, Sir Samuel Romilly; and to the last he had under his care some young persons of opulent families. It must be observed here, to the honour of Dr. Jones, that while he was thus courted by the rich and the noble, he was ever ready to afford encouragement and gratuitous personal assistance and instruction to young men in humble circumstances, whom he found struggling with difficulties in the pursuit of learning.

He acquired no small degree of celebrity as an author, if not by the uniform success, at least by the number, the originality, and the ability of his writings. In the year 1800, while he resided at Halifax, he published his first work, in two volumes 8vo., under the title of "A Development of Remarkable Events, calculated to restore the Christian Religion to its Original Purity, and to repel the Objections of Unbelievers." These volumes contain a vindication of the authenticity of the disputed passage in Josephus, and are remarkable as conveying the first intimation of the hypothesis for which Dr. Jones was afterwards so greatly distinguished, of Josephus and Philo being converts to the Christian faith. In 1801 followed a second part of this work, which the author entitled "The Epistle of Paul to the Romans analyzed, from a Development of those Circumstances in the Romish Church by which it was occasioned." His original plan was much more extensive, but here he discontinued the prosecution of it, meaning, however, to resume the subject at a more advanced period of life. In 1808, he published "Illustrations of the Four Gospels, founded on circumstances peculiar to our Lord and his Evangelists." This work

is distinguished by a mode of thinking peculiar to the author, and evinces an intimate acquaintance with the sacred writings and with Christian antiquity. It is, unquestionably, one of his ablest theological publications. Many of his "Illustrations" are strikingly original; they discover an acute mind, always feelingly alive to the unrivalled excellence of our Lord's manner of instruction, and to the unstudied but exquisite beauties of his historian. Dr. Jones's next work of this class appeared in 1812. It was entitled "Ecclesiastical Researches, or Philo and Josephus proved to be Historians and Apologists of Christ, of his Followers, and of his Gospel." This hypothesis the author also maintained in the Monthly Repository, to which he was a frequent contributor. A sequel to his Ecclesiastical Researches was published in 1813, in which he proposed to trace the origin of the introductory chapters in Matthew and Luke's Gospels from Josephus, and to deduce the peculiar articles of the orthodox faith of the Gnostics, who opposed the Gospel in the days of Christ and his apostles.

Under the name of Essenus, Dr. Jones published, in 1819, a New Version of the first three chapters of Genesis. The work was occasioned by Mr. Bellamy's translation that had then just appeared. In the following year, the appearance of numerous Deistical works induced Dr. Jones to print, in one volume 8vo., "A Series of Important Facts, demonstrating the Truth of the Christian Religion, drawn from the Writings of its Friends and Enemies in the First and Second Centuries." His next publication was "A Reply to two Deistical works, entitled A New Trial of the Witnesses, &c., and Gamaliel Smith's Not Paul but Jesus." In the title of this work he assumed the name of Ben David. His last publication of a theological character, which appeared in 1825, was entitled "Three Letters addressed to the Editor of the Quarterly Review, in which is demonstrated the Genuineness of the Three Heavenly Witnesses, 1 John v. 7. By Ben David." His aim in this tract is to prove that this much-disputed verse, which nearly all the most eminent scholars and writers of modern times have pronounced to be a forgery,

was the genuine composition of the author of the epistle; and that, instead of being foisted into the text, as is commonly maintained, for the purpose of supporting the doctrine of the Trinity, it was actually expunged by the earlier fathers, as furnishing a strong argument in favour of the proper humanity of Christ. This pamphlet exhibits, in the liveliest colours, the sanguine temper of the author's mind, and displays great ingenuity as well as enthusiasm in the maintenance of a favourite hypothesis.

Dr. Jones ranked deservedly high as a scholar and philologist, and his writings on the classical languages are numerous. In 1813, he published a short Latin Grammar, which was reprinted in 1816. In 1804, he published a Greek Grammar on an improved plan, which was repeatedly reprinted; but in the last year the author re-modelled and nearly re-wrote it, and published it under the title of "*Etymologia Græca*, or a Grammar of the Greek Language," &c. In 1812, Dr. Jones published "A Latin and English Vocabulary, on a simple yet philosophical principle, for the use of Schools." This work he afterwards greatly improved and re-published, in 1825, under the title of *Analogiæ Latinæ*, or a Development of those Analogies by which the Parts of Speech in Latin are derived from each other," &c. But his great work on language, to which he had devoted a very large portion of his active life, and the best energies of his mind, was his Greek and English Lexicon, which appeared in 1823, in one volume 8vo. Its success equalled his most sanguine wishes; a large impression was rapidly sold. Though this Lexicon may possibly be liable to some objections, the author has executed his task in a manner highly creditable to his industry, his erudition, his taste and critical acumen. He has been rewarded by the approving verdict of some of the first scholars and critics of the age, and, among others, by the late Dr. Parr. These circumstances encouraged Dr. Jones to print another work of a similar kind, but designed for a different class of persons. This he entitled the "Tyro's Greek and English Lexicon," which is a very excellent and useful publication. Not

long after the publication of the first Greek Lexicon, some severe animadversions in a critical journal drew from the author an indignant and triumphant reply, in a pamphlet which he entitled "An Answer to a Pseudo-Criticism of the Greek-English Lexicon, which appeared in the Second Number of the Westminster Review"—a criticism which he ascribes to a "Mr. John Walker, late Fellow of Dublin College," and characterizes as a malignant personal attack. In 1826, the subject of this memoir published "An Exposure of the Hamiltonian System of Teaching Languages, in a Letter addressed to the author of an Article recommending that System, in No. 87 of the Edinburgh Review." His last work was entitled "An Explanation of the Greek Article, in Three Parts." This work was printed during the author's life-time, but he died before it was published.

The characteristics of Dr. Jones's mind were an irrepressible ardour and enthusiasm in the prosecution of whatever he undertook; great confidence in the correctness of his own views, arising from a consciousness of superior intellectual powers; an utter disdain of the authority of great names, when he failed to be convinced by their arguments; a devoted attachment to truth, and a faithful adherence to what he deemed such, united with a fearless disregard of personal consequences. By posterity he will probably be better known as a scholar and a philologist than as a theologian and ecclesiastical historian, though he seemed himself confidently to expect that the progress of knowledge would tend to support his speculations, and to demonstrate to general conviction the correctness and truth of his theories. He has left his literary property in the charge of trustees, providing that his classical works should be reprinted under the editorial care of his nephew, Mr. James Chervet, of Croydon, who had been educated by him, and of whose classical attainments and judgment he entertained a high opinion. He was interred in the burying-ground of St. George's, Bloomsbury, the parish in which he had resided. Over the grave is placed a plain monumental stone, with the following inscription:

DEPOSITUM
JOHANNIS JONES,
LL. D.,
SOCIET. REGAL. LITER. SOC.
VIRI SACRIS PROFANISQUE LITERIS
APPRIME PERITI,
QUI DIE DECIMO JANUARII,
ANNO DOMINI
MDCCCXXVII.,
OBIIT.*

MR. JOHN JONES was also a native of Wales and the son of a respectable farmer. He received his grammatical education under the Rev. W. Howell, of Swansea; and his academical course occupied three years at Carmarthen and one at York. Before he went to Plymouth, he spent a few months as a supply at Bridgwater, two years as a private tutor in the family of the widow of the Rev. George Morgan, and about one year as pastor of a church at Belper, in Derbyshire. He entered on his office at Plymouth in 1807. His congregation gradually increased, and bright prospects of happiness and usefulness were unfolded before his eyes. But God had a different lot in store for him. His health, which had probably never been strong, could not endure the fatigue of a day-school (which he opened in 1810) in addition to his pulpit and pastoral exertions, and towards the close of the year 1812 it began to fail rapidly. A few months afterwards he removed to Clifton, but all human attempts were unavailing; on the thirtieth of May, 1813, he was carried to his last earthly home, in the burial-ground belonging to the Lewin's Mead Chapel, Bristol.†

* Mon. Repos., N. S., Vol. i. p. 297. Contrary to my first intention, I have found myself obliged to abridge this interesting memoir. In the original, to which is subjoined the initials of Dr. Thomas Rees, the reader will find valuable explanations of the particular objects of the numerous works of Dr. Jones.

† From a memoir by Mr. S. Gibbs, Mon. Rep., O. S., Vol. viii. p. 551.

DEVONPORT.

DEVONPORT, formerly Plymouth-Dock, is pleasantly situated on the eastern bank of Hamoaze, about two miles west of Plymouth. It owes its origin to the establishment of the Dock-Yard in the reign of William III., and its increase in importance since that period has been very rapid. In form it is oblong, measuring nearly three thousand feet from north to south, and fifteen hundred feet from east to west. The streets are wide and well-built, intersecting each other, with some exceptions, at right angles. The foot-ways are paved with variegated marble raised from quarries in the neighbourhood, and presenting, when washed by a shower, a most beautiful appearance.

The parish church of Stoke being incompetent in point of size to accommodate the inhabitants of this densely populated district, numerous places of worship have been from time to time erected within the town of Devonport. St. Aubyn's Chapel, in Chapel Street, and St. John's, in Duke Street, the former built in 1771, and the latter in 1799, conform to the principles of the Established Church. The chief Dissenting meeting-houses are the Calvinistic Chapels in Princess Street, Mount Street, and Ker Street; the Baptist Chapels in Morice Square, and Pembroke Street; the Methodist Chapels in Morice and Windmill-hill Streets; and the Moravian, in James Street. In addition to these, the Dock-Yard Chapel is open to the inhabitants.

"Close to the Town Hall is the Devonport Column, erected by public subscription to commemorate the alteration in the name of the town. A spiral stair-case within the shaft conducts to the summit, from which the spectator enjoys a grand and extensive prospect. The hills, vales, fields, woods, and waters, from Hengeston Down in the north to the ocean in the south—from the wilds of Dartmoor in the east to the billowy eminences of Cornwall in the west—lie before the gaze in a beautiful panorama: while the eye looks down on Devonport and its immediate vicinity as on a map."—CARRINGTON.

Population in 1811,—35,257; in 1821,—39,621; in 1831,—44,454

UNITARIAN CHAPEL.

ALTHOUGH the present chapel is not the first in which the Unitarian inhabitants of Devonport assembled, the history of their proceedings is comparatively modern. It does not appear that they had any place of worship before 1791, when, in consequence of the exertions of the Rev. T. Porter, of Plymouth, a neat chapel was erected in George Street.* The expense of the building was defrayed by voluntary subscriptions in addition to a loan of £200. advanced by the Rev. Theophilus Lindsey. The opening took place April 27, 1791. Dr. Toulmin preached to a crowded audience, and his discourse, which is described as excellent and appropriate, was published. Mr. Kentish, now of Birmingham, having just completed his academical course, was appointed the first minister.

For a short period the new society was numerous and respectable; but the signs of the times were against it. In the following July, the Dissenters throughout the kingdom were alarmed by the accounts of the disgraceful riots at Birmingham. The Unita-

* Of these exertions honourable mention is made, in a letter from the Rev. T. Belsham to the Rev. T. Kenrick.—See WILLIAMS'S *Life of Belsham, p.* 427.

rians at Plymouth Dock, many of whom were employed under Government, partook largely of the general terror. It was reported and currently believed, that Commissioner Fanshawe, of the Dock-Yard, had intimated that he should consider all persons who attended the new chapel as disloyal subjects. This intimation produced the desired effect; most of those who were connected with Government departments withdrew; and professional gentlemen and tradesmen quickly followed the example. The zeal and talents of Mr. Kentish could produce but little impression amidst a torrent of prejudice and persecution; yet notwithstanding his numerous discouragements, that gentleman continued his labours until 1794, when he became the pastor of the congregation at Plymouth.

The subsequent ministers of the first chapel were Mr. Holt, Mr. Rice, Mr. Tingcombe, and Mr. Evans. Mr. Evans was chosen pastor about the year 1798, and continued to officiate until 1806, when it was deemed advisable to sell the chapel.* The amount obtained for it was £1000.; £200. were returned to Mr. Lindsey, a small sum was appropriated to unavoidable expenses, and the remainder transferred by the Trustees to the support of the Plymouth congregation. It would be wrong to consider Prejudice and Persecution the *sole* causes of the dissolution of the Plymouth Dock congregation; the following remarks by one well qualified

* Mr. Evans died in 1828, at Plymouth. See Mon. Repos., N. S., Vol. ii. p. 419.

to judge, point to a deficiency of interest in the services of the chapel. "I would not have it conceived that I am desirous of casting an improper reflection on those gentlemen who filled the pastoral office, but I am apprehensive that their want of success partly arose from the almost total neglect of *doctrinal* preaching. Many a time have I heard Mr. David Evans lament this circumstance, and remark, with considerable emotion, that, were he to go over his days again, he should frequently bring into view the unity and benevolence of God, the proper humanity of Jesus Christ, and the other leading doctrines of Unitarianism."*

Every prospect of a revival of Unitarianism in Plymouth Dock had now almost vanished. The chapel was sold,—the flock scattered,—reputed orthodoxy more successful than ever. But the Supreme Being was advancing his purposes by means unknown to the desponding friends of religious truth. In the year 1805, Mr. Silvanus Gibbs, then an Arminian, became a resident in the town, and undertook a respectable employment in the Dock-Yard. He soon became an occasional hearer of the Rev. John Hawker,—son of the celebrated Doctor of that name,—a most rigid Calvinist, and an active opponent of Unitarianism. Mr. Gibbs also read several Calvinistic works, and ere long he began to regard more favourably the doctrines they inculcated. Violence, however, generally produces a re-

* Mr. Gibbs's *Address at a Meeting of the Devon and Cornwall Association*, 1829, Christ. Ref., Vol. xv. p. 313.

action, especially when employed in abusing a sect or party on account of a conscientious difference of opinion. Both Mr. Hawker and his father were accustomed to rail bitterly against the Unitarians, and to stigmatize them as *disguised infidels, blasphemous apostates,* and *God-denying heretics.* This led Mr. Gibbs to examine for himself; he studied the Scriptures with the single aim of finding the truth as it is in Jesus; and the consequence was, his complete conviction that Unitarian views of the Gospel were "most rational, consistent, and scriptural, most honourable to God, and most beneficial to man."

This change was wrought in the year 1810. Mr. Gibbs valued his new faith too highly, and felt too thankful for the light and peace and strength it brought to his own soul, to hide his talent in a napkin. He lent his friends the books by which he had been convinced; he conversed with them frequently on the all-important subject; and it was not long before his efforts procured for him the pleasure of associating with kindred spirits. In 1812, a few persons rented a room during four months in the summer, where Mr. David Evans, the last minister of the old chapel, officiated; but for want of proper support, this attempt was abandoned. In October, 1817, Mr. Worsley, then of Plymouth, now of Lincoln, commenced a course of lectures, which were delivered on Sunday evenings, once a fortnight, in a school-room at the back of George Street. These lectures were continued until

the following May, and made a considerable though silent impression. The intervening Sunday evenings were filled up by Mr. Evans, in conjunction with Mr. Cree and Mr. Gibbs; but as the number of regular attendants was not large, and several objected to a morning service in consequence of their wish to attend the chapel at Plymouth on that part of the day, there was another cessation about Midsummer in the same year.

Still the Unitarians of Plymouth Dock did not despair. By meeting occasionally, keeping up their library, and circulating tracts, they were always ready to avail themselves of a favourable opportunity for re-assembling regularly. Accordingly, in the spring of 1819, on a visit from Mr. Wright, a Unitarian Missionary, they were found meeting in a room then partially occupied by a congregation of Universalists. On this occasion the spirit of inquiry received a strong impulse; soon afterwards several of the Universalists embraced Unitarianism, and in January, 1820, Mr. Evans, Mr. Worsley, Mr. Gibbs, and a few other friends, engaged to conduct morning and evening services regularly. In March, 1822, it was deemed necessary to engage a more eligible room in Fore Street. Here they continued to worship twice every Lord's day for seven years, at the expiration of which time their numbers and prospects encouraged them to build the present chapel. It was opened June 21, 1829, when three services were conducted; the attendance was very large, and many other circumstances com-

bined to render this a most animating day. The chapel is large enough to accommodate about two hundred and seventy persons; the total expense of the ground and building amounted to £586.; the greater part of this sum has been contributed by strangers at a distance; a debt of nearly £100. still remains and presses rather heavily on the society. One circumstance has induced many to be cheerful givers in this interesting case, and will probably operate in removing altogether the present burden —*almost the whole of the wood-work of the chapel was completed gratuitously by members of the congregation after the usual working-hours of the day.*

By means of their steady, well-directed zeal, this interesting society are gradually producing a favourable impression at Devonport. But they are still unable to support a minister;—their own means of subsistence being chiefly derived from the scanty and lately-reduced wages of the Dock-Yard. This is to be regretted, because the gratuitous and very useful services of Mr. Gibbs are precarious; his health is delicate, and his professional engagements during the week are pressing. For some time he had the assistance in the new chapel of Mr. Hancock, who died suddenly in October, 1832, and of Mr. Bayley, who at the end of the following year removed to Warminster. The services of Mr. Gibbs are not confined to the pulpit; he has published several letters to young people, and other beneficial pamphlets. The congregation, regarding the circulation of books and tracts as among the best means

of disseminating their principles, have collected a Chapel Library which now contains nearly one thousand books and tracts. "Not only (says a neighbouring minister) do the members study these books at their own houses and lend them to others; but it is their custom to meet in the chapel on Tuesday evenings, for the purpose of reading and conversing on religious subjects. And I know not a more interesting sight than that which is presented by a number of men in humble circumstances, thus meeting together after the labours of the day in the house which has been erected mainly through their own exertions, partly by their own hands, and dedicated to the worship of the Universal Father, and there reading of his works and ways, and conversing on subjects the most exalting and ennobling upon which the human mind can be exercised." *

* *Letter on behalf of the Congregation, by the Rev.* W. J. Odgers, *of Plymouth.*

Cornwall.

FALMOUTH AND FLUSHING.

THE County of Cornwall contains only two Unitarian congregations. Both have been formed since the beginning of the present century. About forty ministers were ejected from livings in Cornwall in 1662, but the number of Presbyterians was never large. Some of the persecuted pastors found flocks in the neighbouring county, and the adherents to others were not sufficiently numerous to form permanent congregations. The Baptists and Independents have now many flourishing churches. Wesley and Whitfield also collected large societies, and rendered incalculable service to the cause of Religion.

In the last century there were societies at Falmouth, Truro, and a few other places, which possessed the services of liberal Presbyterian ministers. That at Liskeard will occur to all who are acquainted with the life and writings of the excellent and highly-gifted Henry Moore. At various times there have also been intelligent and influential individuals in the county who have professed Unitarian sentiments. The late Rev. Sir Harry Trelawny, Bart., is well known to have halted at one period of his

life at this form of Christianity. I have already noticed his assistance at an ordination service at Lympstone, in conjunction with Dr. Priestley, Dr. Kippis, and Mr. Towgood. He also, for some time, used Lindsey's Reformed Liturgy in his own chapel at Trelawny. In 1822, great interest was excited in the religious circles of the West by the supposed heterodoxy of another Baronet, the late Sir Rose Price, of Trenguainton, near Penzance, who had served the office of High Sheriff in 1814, and was highly respected both in public and private life.* This gentleman was obliged to resign his office of President of a religious society in consequence of his rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity, and his avowal that he would do all in his power to promote the worship of the Father only, and the diffusion of other opinions which he deemed scriptural. About the same time, the friends of free inquiry in Cornwall were presented with an excellent pamphlet, entitled "The Unitarian Doctrine briefly stated by a Physician," which was understood to be from the pen of a gentleman distinguished both for high attainments and extensive usefulness.

In 1811, the Rev. R. Wright visited Cornwall at the request of the Committee of the Unitarian Fund. His chief object was to ascertain how far future missions among the inhabitants would be likely to prove successful. His report was so satisfactory, that it induced the Committee soon after his return to send another missionary — Mr. Gisburne, to

* Mon. Repos., Vol. xix. p. 88.

strengthen the interest excited by his visits. The labours of these missionaries were principally encouraged at Falmouth, a place of great commerce, and in Flushing, a village at a short distance from Falmouth, on the eastern side of the harbour. Before the arrival of Mr. Wright, several candid and intelligent members of the Wesleyan societies in these places had been led by their own serious and unbiassed study of the Scriptures, to doubt the truth of the commonly-received doctrines. At this period their number consisted of about twelve; they pursued their inquiries with great earnestness; and the result was, their abandonment of the doctrine of the Trinity and several kindred tenets, and their cordial adoption of the Unitarian faith and worship. The existence of this band of Bereans induced Mr. Wright to renew his efforts; he revisited Cornwall twice,—in 1815, with the Rev. T. Cooper, and in 1819, with the Rev. J. Smethurst. On both occasions the missionaries went to various parts of the county, addressed large congregations, and distributed a great number of tracts; but it does not appear that permanent impressions were made in any towns besides Falmouth and Flushing.

We must now go back to the year 1812, when those decisive steps were taken which occasioned the establishment of Unitarian worship. The movement was commenced at Flushing in consequence of an inquisition, authorized by the Conference and conducted by a Mr. Seckerson,—an assistant preacher, concerning the supposed heresy of a

few members of the Methodist society in that town. Mr. Seckerson had just returned from London, invested with full power by the Conference to excommunicate all who could not give him satisfactory answers to his questions upon the six articles of what he called *genuine Methodism*.* When he had preached his first sermon, he requested the society, or members of the church, to remain in the chapel; and, after praying for his mistaken brethren, he proceeded to open his commission and question the suspected members. Their answers were, of course, unsatisfactory; some of the members were expelled on the spot; and the consequence of this tyrannical proceeding was, the separation of ten members from the Methodist society at Flushing.

Six weeks afterwards, a similar scene was witnessed at Falmouth. To this place Mr. Seckerson was accompanied by Mr. Riles, the chairman of the district. When the usual preaching and praying were over, a meeting was held, and questions were again put to suspected members. Here the interest in this inquisition was considerable, in consequence of the religious stations of the heretics,—nearly all being officers in the church before which they were brought to trial. One of the most zealous was at the same time a popular Local Preacher,—a Stew-

* "1. The Total Depravity of Human Nature. 2. The True and Proper Deity of Jesus Christ. 3. The Satisfaction to the Divine Justice. 4. Faith in the Merits and Intercession of Christ. 5. The immediate influence of the Spirit. 6. Endless Rewards and Punishments."—Mon. Repos., O. S., Vol. vii. p. 650.

ard, Leader, and Trustee.* To return to the questions of the officers appointed by Conference. Some of the accused declined giving any answer. They contended that the tribunal was incompetent in every point of view. Mr. Philp proved that the whole proceeding was inconsistent with the rules of the Society, the writings of Wesley, the dictates of reason, and—the word of God. Others, thus put upon their trial, expressed, with indignant eloquence, their sense of the tyrannical nature of the inquisition and their determination to retain their mental freedom. The affair was terminated on the part of the conclave, by a declaration that the heretics were to be no longer considered *officers* in the church; on which these noble-minded men retired altogether from the Wesleyans, and immediately commenced Unitarian worship.

In the following year (1813) there were about thirty professors of Unitarianism in this neighbourhood. The more zealous engaged two large rooms, one at Falmouth, the other at Flushing, for public religious services; and both were, at first, well filled. Mr. Philp gave his valuable services, and was assisted by one of his excommunicated brethren. An interesting account of their proceedings in 1815 is given by Mr. Wright, who visited them in that

* This was Mr. Philp, who afterwards became the minister of the Unitarian congregation at Lincoln, and is now one of the valuable missionaries employed by the City Mission Society in London (consisting of Unitarians) for visiting and relieving the poor at their own houses, and imparting religious instruction to them and their children on the Lord's day.

year.* "They retain (he says) the best part of Methodism,—zeal, a high degree of the devotional spirit, and the habit of attending diligently to public worship and other religious services." About this time the Unitarians at Falmouth, finding the situation of their room inconvenient and discouraging, and wishing to obtain a more permanent settlement, attempted to buy a piece of ground for building, but were prevented by their opponents. In 1816, the theatre, which they had also previously tried in vain to procure, was unexpectedly offered them; they immediately made the purchase, and fitted up the building for public worship. The stage is used as a vestry and Sunday school-room; connected with the building are a stable and a hay-loft, the rent of which has been highly serviceable to the finances. The total expense amounted to £550.; the sum of £400. was contributed almost immediately by Unitarians in various parts of the country; but a great part of the remainder is still unpaid. The chapel was opened June 26, 1818. Dr. Carpenter preached twice, and the devotional services were conducted by Mr. Philp and Mr. Smethurst.

For some years the congregation at Falmouth continued in a promising state. It depended, however, almost entirely on the services of lay preachers, which at length became precarious; this circumstance occasioned a diminution in the number of hearers. In 1827, Mr. Philp removed to Lincoln; but visits continued to be paid occasionally.

* Wright's Life and Labours, p. 392.

by missionaries from London. It should also be mentioned, that the preaching of the latter produced a deep conviction of the value of religion in the minds of several young men, who exerted themselves on behalf of the Falmouth society. Two of these, soon after this period, quitted their native homes, to commence their studies for the Christian ministry;—both are now occupying important stations in the West of England. In the year 1829, Mr. Harding, who had for many years officiated as a missionary in various parts of the kingdom, took up his residence at Falmouth and regularly ministered to the little church. He, however, quitted two years afterwards for America.

Within the last few years the services have been generally conducted by Mr. Philp, Jun., the Editor and printer of the Christian Child's Faithful Friend. The congregation is very small, and Mr. Philp perseveres amidst many discouraging circumstances.

The recent history of the society at Flushing so nearly resembles that of its Falmouth neighbour as to render a separate statement unnecessary. It must be recorded, however, that, by the generous efforts of one or two individuals, the chapel at Flushing has been lately purchased and secured to the Unitarians. The services are regularly conducted by Mr. Odgers, Sen., one of the serious and independent inquirers who were declared to be unworthy of holding office among the Wesleyans.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF THE REV. SIR HARRY TRELAWNY, BARONET.

THIS eccentric religionist was descended from an ancient and honourable family in the county of Cornwall. Trelawny, the seat of his ancestors, was, when he took possession of it, a venerable Gothic mansion, rendered peculiarly striking by its old towers rising amidst the surrounding woods.

He received part of his education at Westminster School, and completed it at Christ Church College, Oxford. Even when very young, his sobriety and religious turn of mind rendered him an object of ridicule to his gay companions. This, however, he had sufficient strength of mind to enable him to disregard; and by pursuing the same course he obtained, while at the University, the friendship and affection of Dr. Bagot, Dr. Horne, and several other dignitaries of the Church.

When the time came for him to take his Bachelor's degree, it was found that his conscience, as well as his habitual deportment, was purer than that of many of his brethren. Before he declared "his unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained in the Book of Common Prayer," he chose to examine whether he could, *bond fide*, make such a declaration. This examination excited in his mind many doubts and much uneasiness, and he saw plainly that subscription to articles of faith was not a matter to be trifled with; but the plausible reasoning of some friends to whom he stated his objections, led him to acquiesce; and he remained for a little while a true son of the Church.

Before he left Oxford, however, he formed an acquaintance with some enthusiasts, who made a great impression upon him. Under their influence, and guided, as he generally was in after life, by a warm imagination rather than by sober reason, he attached himself to the Methodists. On coming into the country, he made an intimate companion of the celebrated Rowland Hill,

with whom he travelled through the towns and villages of Cornwall, preaching at all hours—in fields, in streets—wherever they could collect a company to hear them. Sir Harry excited especial attention; he had such a thundering voice, such a copiousness of words, such bold figures and flights of fancy, such a commanding appearance and earnestness of address, that many of his uncultured auditors looked up to him as to an angel dropped from the clouds.

On some occasions the orators were calmly remonstrated with by their friends, and on others they experienced ungentler usage. At a fair in Pelint, where they resolved "to attack Satan on his own ground," the crowd were equally determined to prevent them from putting their warlike intentions in practice; and had it not been for the rank of one of the combatants, they would certainly have been pelted out of the town. At Saltash, when Sir Harry was in the market-place, haranguing a numerous auditory, some gentlemen of the neighbourhood interrupted their devotion by riding in among them with a pack of hounds, which made such hideous cries, and caused such a commotion among the people, that the preacher could not be heard, and therefore thought proper to withdraw. The chief gentleman of the town came afterwards to him, told him that he was the cause of the interruption—that he did it out of respect to Sir Harry's family—that he was not willing he should so *expose* himself, and, "Depend on it, Sir Harry, (said he,) if you ever come to your senses, you will thank me for it!" This prediction, it is said, was actually verified. It may, however, be justly suggested that such was not the best mode that could be adopted for removing the evil. Some "respect" was due to Sir Harry's auditors, poor and illiterate as they were; his pursuits were probably quite as harmless as those of his fox-hunting disturbers; and if he "exposed himself" by preaching to a crowd, there was almost as questionable an exhibition on the part of those who sent their pack of hounds among them. It is also related, that during the silent pause that preceded his ministrations before an audience in a spacious hall at Totness, a physician of that town,

who regarded the Baronet with concern, exclaimed at the door of entrance in a well-known verse—

"Ah! Corydon, Corydon, quæ te dementia cepit?"

"Ah! Corydon, Corydon, what infatuation has seized thee?"

These circumstances cooled Sir Harry's zeal, and he soon relinquished preaching in the open air. Being frequently in London, he commenced an acquaintance with the more moderate Dissenters—particularly the Independents. From them he imbibed the principles of Nonconformity; and ere long he sent to Oxford and had his name erased from the College books. Soon afterwards he was ordained at Southampton, in the meeting-house of the Rev. Mr. Kingsbury,—that pious and liberal minister, with several others of the same denomination, engaging in the usual service. His confession of faith was Calvinistic, but the reasons he assigned for his Nonconformity were solid and important; and in proportion as he read and thought, his sentiments on other subjects approached nearer the pure and benignant religion of the gospel. Meanwhile he engaged the Rev. Mr. Clayton as his domestic chaplain, and built a meeting-house at West Looe for his own followers, who were very numerous, and to whom he officiated a considerable time. About the same period, he increased his attachment to home by marrying Miss Browne, the daughter of a clergyman at Kingstone, near Taunton,—an excellent and accomplished young lady.

A gradual alteration now took place in Sir Harry Trelawny's opinions and style of preaching. "He was no longer (says one of his intimate friends) the fiery bigot, denouncing anathemas on all who differed from him. His sentiments became more moderate; his censoriousness was exchanged for Christian charity; the catholic principles of religious liberty daily gained ground in his mind, and he was now justly entitled to the noble epithet of a rational, liberal Dissenter." This change was accelerated in some degree by the new friends with whom Sir Harry was acquainted. The excellent Mr. Howe, late of Bridport, then a student at Hoxton, was an occasional

visiter at Trelawny, and afterwards succeeded Mr. Clayton in the office of chaplain. In 1778, the reverend Baronet was admitted a member of the Exeter Assembly, and preached a sermon before that respectable body, which was published, and which, though not distinguished by depth of judgment or close reasoning, is written with classical elegance and precision, and breathes a Christian spirit of candour and benevolence. About the same time, he published a sermon which he had preached in the Presbyterian chapel at Taunton; this production manifested (says Mr. Howe) "a mind engaged in the search of truth, unterrified by the anathemas of the bigot, and unconcerned about the consequences of free inquiry and impartial examination."

An account of Sir Harry's co-operation with Dr. Priestley, Dr. Kippis, and others, at an ordination at Lympstone, has been given elsewhere. Notwithstanding the candour and fearlessness displayed by him on this occasion, there was soon afterwards observable "an inconstancy of mind and fickleness of temper, which seemed to indicate that the revolutions in his religious sentiments were not at an end." Some of his friends in the Established Church, knowing his disposition better than he knew it, availed themselves of every opportunity of urging him to return to his *alma mater*. Still confident, however, of the correctness of the position he had assumed, and anxious to justify himself to the world, he published a letter to a clergyman containing his reasons for joining and continuing with the Dissenters. From this production it was evident that he believed the doctrines of the Church to be unscriptural, and that he regarded "submission to terms of clerical conformity as inconsistent with the allegiance due to Jesus Christ, the sole Head and Lawgiver of the Church." But the effect of this literary effort was not what he expected. Instead of quieting his friends, it brought from them a number of letters, in the shape of answers, more earnest and more plausible than ever. Sir Harry began to waver. Ere long he was in great distress and anxiety of mind. And now he had many interviews with the Bishop of Exeter, the Archbishop of York, and many other of his old

friends. They saw that the greatest stumbling-block in his way to conformity was subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles; and this they removed by virtually saying to him, "If you subscribe, Sir Harry, the whole meaning of your subscription will be, that you are *a Christian*"! In less than two months after the publication of his apology, he returned to the communion of the Established Church. The reader will scarcely be able to decide which was the more lamentable, the fickleness of the Baronet or the fallacies of his friends.*

It should be mentioned, that considerations of a minor nature were presented to Sir Harry Trelawny. He was reminded of the desirableness of "returning to the *religion of his ancestors*, and retrieving the *honour of his family*." He was certainly

* The same fallacies are still maintained in high places. See the speech of the Bishop of Exeter, in a recent discussion in the House of Lords, on a Bill for Abolishing Subscription to Articles of Faith in the English Universities. See also the admirable speech of the Earl of Radnor, by whom the Bill was introduced. In this speech was the following sentence: "The idea which was disseminated, that young men might be allowed to sign these articles without understanding them, was a doctrine, the propagation of which must, in his opinion, tend to undermine the best principles of morality, and to inculcate equivocation and hypocrisy."

The feelings, if not the expressions, at many a matriculation scene have been thus faithfully described by a popular poet. He pictures a well-known polemic making known *his* version of the Thirty-nine Articles to an inquisitive student:—

Doctor P——.

"Oh, a mere form of words, to make things smooth and brief,—
A commodious and short make-believe of belief,
Which our Church has drawn up, in a form thus articular,
To keep out, in general, all who're particular—
But what's the boy doing? What! reading all through,
And my luncheon fast cooling!—this never will do!

Boy (poring over the articles). Here are points, which—
Pray, Doctor, what's 'Grace of Congruity'?

Dr. P. (sharply). You'll find out, young Sir, when you've more ingenuity.
At present, by signing, you pledge yourself merely,
Whatever it may be, to believe it sincerely.
Both in *dining* and *signing* we take the same plan,—
First, to swallow all down, then digest—as we can."

influenced, in no small degree, by those stronger appeals to the senses which were found in the services of the Established Church, and which he always admired while he professed Unitarianism. Mr. Howe, who was often in his company after his conformity, frequently heard him declare that he did not believe the Creeds and articles of the Church of England in their literal sense, but that he put his own construction upon them, and thought he might maintain the two characters—a clergyman of the Establishment and an inquirer after truth.

All who differ from the Baronet on these points, and all who have observed the deplorable want of decision which he manifested, as well as his love of forms and ceremonies, will not be surprised to hear that he wandered once more before he died;—he became a Roman Catholic.

Amidst all these changes his private character commanded general respect. He died at an advanced age, about the beginning of the year 1834, at Lavino, on the Lago Maggiore, in the Milanese. His title devolved on his son, William Trelawny, Esq., Member of Parliament for the eastern division of Cornwall.*

* Christian Reformer, N. S., Vol. i. p. 502 and p. 506.

Appendix.

SKETCHES OF THE HISTORY

OF

THE EXETER ASSEMBLY OF MINISTERS,

AND

THE WESTERN UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

Sketch of the History of the Exeter Assembly of Ministers.

There are traces of the existence of a union among certain ministers in Devon and Cornwall, so early as the year 1606. Those ministers ranked under the denomination of Puritan, and experienced their full share of persecution and obloquy. Their objections to various puerile ecclesiastical ceremonies were exaggerated by the episcopal party into a denial of the king's supremacy; and they were accordingly charged with disloyalty and sedition. This injurious charge had been completely disproved by Bradshaw's treatise entitled "English Puritanism;" but the boldness with which the calumny was still propagated obliged the ministers of Devon and Cornwall to unite in publishing another defence, entitled "A Removal of Certain Imputations, &c."*

* Neal's History of the Puritans, second edition, Vol. i. p. 353. The following extract is quoted by Neal, from the treatise published by the Devon and Cornwall ministers:—"Let the Bishops sift well our courses since his Majesty's happy entrance in among us, and let them name wherein we have done aught that may justly be said ill to become the ministers of Jesus Christ. Have we drawn any sword? Have we raised any tumult? Have we raised any threats? Hath the state been put to any fear or hazard through us? Manifold disgraces have been cast upon us, and we have endured them; the liberty of our ministry hath been taken from us, and (though with bleeding hearts) we have sustained it. We have been cast out of our houses, and deprived of our ordinary maintenance, yet have we blown no trumpet of sedition. These things have gone very near us, and yet did we never so much as entertain a thought of violence. The truth is, we have petitioned the King and State; and who hath reason to deny us that liberty? We have craved of the prelates to deal with us according to law; and is not this the common benefit of every subject? We have besought them to convince our consciences by Scripture. Alas! what would they have us to do? Will they have us content ourselves with this only, that they are Bishops, and therefore for their greatness ought to be yielded to? The weight of episcopal power may oppress us, but cannot convince us."

The Puritan pastors in these counties probably continued to act in concert, though not as a regularly constituted body, on various occasions during the reigns of James the First and Charles the First. It was in the time of the Commonwealth that the earliest associations of this kind were organized; and the merit of setting the example is chiefly due to Mr. Baxter who, with a few of his brethren, formed an assembly of ministers in Worcestershire, in the year 1653.* About the same time, Mr. George Hughes, then of Plymouth and afterwards ejected from his living in that town, in conjunction with Mr. Thomas Ford, one of the preachers at the Exeter Cathedral, who was also ejected on Bartholomew Day, "prevailed with the ministers of those parts, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational, to join in an association for mutual assistance in their ministry. They parcelled themselves into seven divisions, each met quarterly, and subdivided themselves into lesser bodies, which met every six weeks. In their quarterly meetings the Moderator opened them with a *Latin* prayer; then there was a thesis upon some divinity question, and a disputation, wherein all the ministers present opposed the respondent."†

It appears from this statement, that the original design of the Exeter Assembly related more to the mutual benefit of the ministers than to the discussion of their congregational affairs. Yet either their objects must have been numerous or the danger of irregularity great, for we are told that *thirty* rules were laid down for their government. Some of these rules breathe a very liberal spirit. All the divisions met annually at Exeter,—a practice which promoted their acquaintance and amicable correspondence with each other. The first meeting was held October 18, 1655; and another in the month of May in the following year;—Mr. Hughes, of Plymouth, presided over both. They were soon joined by several episcopal divines of high character; and the benevolent intentions of the founders of the institution were already in the course of fulfilment. "By these Assemblies," says Mr. Baxter, "they opened and preserved a friendly

* Mon. Rep. Vol. xii. p. 641. † Noncon. Mem. Vol. i. p. 391.

correspondence amongst ministers, they removed a great many prejudices and misunderstandings, insomuch that the controversial heats of angry men began to be allayed, their spirits bettered, and the ends of religion more generally promoted."* Too soon, alas, was this improvement checked; the re-establishment of Episcopacy at the Restoration was the signal for the revival of all old sectarian jealousies; it was unsafe for any body of men in the slightest degree opposed to the new state of things to meet together; and the first Exeter Assembly was dissolved when it had existed little more than four years! The minutes of their proceedings during this interesting period are still preserved.

Thirty years elapsed before the times permitted the formation of a similar body. It was in 1691 that this object was undertaken and the present association commenced. At the first meeting, Mr. Sanders, ejected from Kentisbeare and settled at Tiverton, presided as Moderator; and Mr. Caryl, ejected from Uplawman and settled at Crediton, preached. These ministers were Presbyterians; and their original object appears to have been the establishment of a clerical board consisting exclusively of members of their own body. But at the second meeting, Mr. Flavel, of Dartmouth, another ejected minister, and a truly catholic Christian, being called upon to preach, took occasion to suggest the propriety of a union among Dissenters of different denominations, and eventually succeeded. The minutes of this Assembly, from its formation in 1691 down to the year 1721, are lost;—there are, however, various accounts of its proceedings, in pamphlets published in the West of England during the interval, which shew that its spirit was very different from that

* Quoted by Mr. Manning, in a discourse delivered before the Assembly, June 24, 1818, and published at their unanimous request. Appended to this discourse is a list of the Protestant Dissenting ministers settled in Devonshire, from 1662 to 1818. The value of this list would have been considerably enhanced by the introduction of dates, shewing the duration of the labours of each minister. It may also be remarked, that several typographical errors both in the discourse and the appendix, escaped the observation of the compiler.

of the assemblies which were honoured with the eulogy of Baxter. This may be inferred from those imperfect notices of the proceedings of the Exeter body which I have had occasion to introduce in the preceding pages. Ample allowance should unquestionably be made for the difficulties in which the earliest Nonconformists were involved, and, especially, for the necessity, imposed by their peculiar position—of securing a well-educated ministry. It is impossible, however, for any enlightened Dissenter of the present day to look back upon the inquisitorial proceedings of the Exeter Assembly, during the interval in question,—particularly, in reference to the opinions of Stogdon, Peirce, and Hallet, without acknowledging that the members violated the plainest principles of Christian liberty, acted inconsistently with their own professions as Protestant Dissenters, and employed their unwarrantable power in promoting, not "the ends of religion" but "envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness."

The minutes of the Assembly from the year 1721 to the present time are preserved. They afford no indication of improvement in the spirit or objects of the association for upwards of thirty years. Their proceedings were similar, in many respects, to those of the Presbyteries of their forefathers; which, there is reason to suppose, many of the members would have gladly revived. "In these assemblies," says Mr. Manning,* "a moderator was chosen, who opened and conducted the meeting with prayer. In the morning service, two or three ministers took a part. They met again in the afternoon to consult about the affairs of their respective societies, distributed the collections received from them, examined the testimonials of those who offered themselves as candidates for the ministry, appointed three of their number to inquire more particularly into their acquaintance with the doctrines of Christianity, into the progress they had made in literature, the views with which they undertook the ministry, and their aptness to teach; in order to judge of which a theological thesis was to be exhibited in Latin, to the perusal of the examiners, and if they found them qualified

* Discourse before the Assembly, p. 12.

for the Christian ministry, they gave them a certificate of their approbation. The Assembly then appointed the ordainers. From these minutes it appears, that the members of the Assembly agreed that they should not meddle with politics or the affairs of civil government, or pretend to exercise any church censures, but only assist, advise, and encourage, each other in propagating truth and holiness, and keeping their churches free from illiterate ministers and scandalous communicants." This agreement, which, if generally acted up to in the letter, was often departed from in the spirit by the Assembly at this period, owed its origin to the "Articles of Concord," drawn up by the first Assembly in the year 1655. *

It was about the middle of the last century that this body began to see the necessity of relinquishing a part of their unscriptural authority. The removal of Mr. Towgood to Exeter, which took place in 1749, gave that gentleman an opportunity of advocating with success his own liberal and enlightened opinions on this subject. By means of his arguments, many members of the Assembly gradually became convinced that their conduct, with regard to the examination of candidates for the ministry, was wrong,—that, by insisting upon qualifications which the Scriptures do not require, they assumed an unlawful jurisdiction over the consciences of men. "They perceived," says Mr. Manning,† "that admitting one unscriptural test to be proposed, by an order of the Assembly, as a necessary term of admission to the Christian ministry, was a matter of very serious moment, and drew after it consequences extremely important; for, one being admitted, two, ten, or thirty-nine might with equal right be hereafter added, the tendency of which was too obvious not to be observed, and too formidable not to be the object of dread. It being therefore proposed to the Assembly which met in 1753, to take into consideration the fol-

* Manning's Life of Towgood, p. 11. At the ordination of Mr. Towgood, in 1722, the subject which the Assembly desired him to treat on was, "*An Baptisma Infantum sit validum?*"

† Discourse, p. 14.

lowing question, 'whether the Assembly will recommend any Candidates who refuse to declare their faith in the Deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit,' it was debated whether the question should be put, and decided by a considerable majority in the negative. This debate would probably have given rise to very warm animosities, had they not been very seasonably discountenanced by the truly catholic and conciliating conduct of some aged ministers.* In consequence of this vote, it has been left wholly with the respective congregations to satisfy themselves of the qualifications of the persons they choose for their ministers."

Towards the close of the last century, a still further improvement became visible in the proceedings of the Exeter Assembly. This may undoubtedly be attributed, in a great degree, to the influence and exertions of two ministers who have been frequently mentioned in these pages,—the Rev. Joseph Bretland, and the Rev. Timothy Kenrick. While these gentlemen were anxious that the immediate objects of the Assembly should be vigorously promoted, and that the members should avail themselves of the light which had been increasing for nearly a century†—the time during which their institution had existed,—they were also desirous of proving that they and their brethren could extend their interest to those occurrences, whether in the West of England or at a distance, in which was involved the welfare of Protestant Dissent. Accordingly we find that one of those welcome addresses which, in the year 1791, poured in upon the persecuted Dr. Priestley, was from the Exeter Assembly; and it is impossible to avoid admiring the contrast between their spirit at this period, and that which they manifested at the beginning of the century. "We think ourselves bound (they say in addressing Dr. Priestley), though several of

* See a letter by the Rev. P. Baron, of Plymouth, to the Rev. J. Walrond, of Exeter, formerly of Ottery,—the latter being one of the most violent advocates for doctrinal tests.—*Life of Towgood*, p. 55.

† See Mr. Kenrick's sermon, "An inquiry into the best method of communicating religious knowledge to young men," preached before the Assembly, May 7, 1788.

us differ from you in opinion on various subjects, to seize the opportunity which our meeting affords us of *uniting* in an address to you on the occasion of your late sufferings and losses." Again, "It affords us great pleasure to hear that you have already received a letter of condolence from some of our brethren of different religious sentiments and denominations, couched in terms expressive of warm affection and esteem. We would flatter ourselves that this noble example of a truly liberal spirit and behaviour will be followed by many others, and that one beneficial consequence of the late riots at Birmingham will be, the establishment of a closer union, and of a more general and friendly intercourse among Dissenters of every description." *

The discourse by Mr. Manning, of much of whose valuable testimony the reader has already had the advantage, brings the history of the Assembly down to the year 1818. It appears that several alterations had been made from time to time in the rules, the most important of which bears date September, 1801, when it was resolved that there should be only one assembly in the year, to be held on the last Wednesday in June. The following extract contains a pleasing statement of Mr. Manning's experience as a member of this venerable body. "During forty-four years in which I have resided in this county, I do not remember having been once absent from the Assembly, and am therefore a competent witness, and have no hesitation in declaring, that these meetings have always been conducted with great decency and order, and have, in no small degree, conduced to the comfort and encouragement of the ministers, cherished mutual affection, and animated them to more zealous exertions in the duties of their profession. We do not meet as a priesthood, a privileged order, distinct from our brethren, as having an interest different from theirs. We utterly disclaim all pretensions to religious domination, to the least shadow of authority or controul over the faith or religious practice of our fellow-christians. We do not assemble ourselves together to settle any point of doctrine, or any matter of Christian disci-

* Priestley's Works, Rutt's edition, Vol. i. Part i. p. 154.

pline. We do not hold our assembly on the narrow principles of a party, but on the broad grounds of unlimited freedom of inquiry, and the brotherhood of all who believe that Jesus is the Christ."

Strange as it may appear, in proportion as these sentiments have gained ground in the Assembly, the interest of the Devon and Cornwall ministers in its proceedings has declined. The annual meeting is still held at George's Meeting, on the last Wednesday in June; but the number of members is much reduced. There is a morning service,—the preacher and the minister to pray having been appointed at the previous annual meeting; two others are nominated to officiate in the event of their failure. After the service, the ministers who are members of the Assembly meet in the vestry, when the preacher of the former year acts as Moderator, and opens and concludes the meeting with prayer. The chief object of this meeting is to grant exhibitions out of the funds of the Assembly to the ministers of small congregations needing assistance. Afterwards the members dine together, and thus conclude that interchange of thought and feeling which is still found, as it was in the time of the excellent Baxter, to "better the spirits" of men, and promote "the great ends of religion."

Sketch of the History of the Western Unitarian Society.

The first rule of this Society requires that it "shall be denominated the Society of Unitarian Christians, established in the West of England, for promoting Christian Knowledge and the practice of Virtue by distributing books."

The qualification for membership has never included a declaration of assent to any articles of faith. The terms of admission are thus stated in the fifth rule of the original code:—"Every person recommended after the meeting in May, 1792, by two members, shall be considered as a member of this Society, upon paying his admission fee and subscription for the current year, or compounding for his subscription." The admission fee was ten shillings and sixpence, the annual subscription—the same sum, and the composition—the payment, at one time, of five guineas.

There was, however, a preamble to the rules, drawn up by the founders of the Society, in the principles avowed by which the members were supposed to concur. After asserting that the value of Christianity is lessened by the errors which are blended with it, the preamble thus continues:—"Considering that one principal obstruction to the progress of just sentiments in religion has arisen from the want of an open avowal of them, on the part of those by whom they have been embraced, or of other methods of making them known to the world, we have thought proper to associate ourselves together, in order to distribute among those who are disposed to inquire, such books as appear to us to contain the purest account of the doctrines of revelation, and to be the best calculated to promote the interests of true piety and virtue, but more particularly among such persons as, from their situation in life, are precluded in a great measure from obtaining the means of information; declaring it to be the fundamental principle of the Society, in which we all agree, *that there is but One God, the*

Creator and Governor of the Universe, without an equal or a vice gerent, the only proper object of religious worship; and that Jesus Christ was the most eminent of those messengers which he has employed to reveal his will to mankind, possessing extraordinary powers similar to those received by other prophets, but in a much higher degree. While we thus declare our belief in the strict unity of God, and cannot but regard every practice as idolatrous which attributes any of the prerogatives of the Deity to another, a conclusion in which we think ourselves warranted by the language of Scripture, we would not be understood to assert that we think such practices are attended with the same immoral consequences as the idolatry which prevailed in the ancient heathen world. That they are, however, in *all* cases injurious, and in *some* highly criminal, we have no doubt; but how far they may be so in any particular instance we pretend not to determine, as it must depend upon circumstances which can be known only to the individuals concerned, and to that Being who searches their hearts."

This preamble was framed in unison with one which had been adopted a few months previously on the formation of the London Unitarian Book Society, or, as it was then called, "the Unitarian Society"—there being no other of the same kind in the kingdom. The association in the West of England was founded by a few gentlemen who advocated the principles to which their friends in London attached the greatest importance—viz., that the worship of Jesus Christ was idolatrous, and that deviations from the doctrine of our Lord's simple humanity were highly injurious. The idea of forming the Society originated with W. Davy, Esq., of Fordton, who presided, in 1834, at the forty-second annual meeting. By Mr. Davy the suggestion appears to have been communicated to the Rev. Timothy Kenrick, of Exeter. This faithful labourer was also anxious that an effort should be made in the West of England. "He had formed a plan" (says his son—the Rev. J. Kenrick, of York,)*

* Mon. Rep., Vol. xiii. p. 230. The materials for this account were derived from a series of letters put into the hands of the author—Mr. John

"for the delivery of a series of lectures upon those doctrines of Christianity of which erroneous notions commonly prevail, and had engaged eight or nine ministers in Exeter and its vicinity to bear a part in it. The chief peculiarity in the plan was, that the whole course was to be délivered in one place, by the associated preachers, each taking his turn, at the interval of a fortnight, and then to be repeated to their respective congregations, till the whole series had been preached in every place comprehended in the union. A week-day evening was chosen both for the convenience of the ministers, and to avoid giving offence to those who disliked the introduction of controversy into the pulpit on the sabbath. The sermon was to contain 'a brief but comprehensive view of the arguments from reason and scripture, in support of the doctrine maintained, accompanied with inferences and observations calculated to shew that it will have no unfavourable influence upon the religious conduct of those by whom it is embraced, but, on the contrary, affords a good or a better foundation for peace and comfort, and for the duties of piety and morality, than the opposite opinion. The whole to be conducted with as little appearance of controversy as can be admitted.' The Mint Meeting, at Exeter, which had been built for Mr. James Peirce, as a refuge to heresy and liberty of conscience from the fury of the western inquisitors, was the place fixed upon for the first delivery of the lectures; but, on application being made to the Trustees, the use of it for such a purpose was refused."

The author proceeds to express his belief that this refusal "arose, not from any hostility to Unitarianism, but from a fear that the jealousy of Government, then beginning to be awakened by the introduction of revolutionary principles from France, might be excited by this open attack on established opinions, or even the buildings be endangered by the outrages of a church-and-king mob." In consequence of this difficulty at the outset, the scheme for delivering a series of lectures was never carried

Kenrick, by Mr. Isaac, of Moreton-Hampstead, to whom they were addressed by Mr. Timothy Kenrick.

into execution: although, in a letter written by Mr. Kenrick to Mr. Isaac immediately after, he announces his design of persevering in it. The object which these zealous individuals so ardently desired to see accomplished, was, in the course of a few months, promoted in a way which they probably did not anticipate. On the fourth of January, 1792, several ministers and other friends of religious truth assembled at Bridwell, near Collumpton, the seat of Richard Hall Clarke, Esq., to witness the opening of an Unitarian chapel erected by that gentleman. On this occasion, the best means of diffusing the true doctrines of the Gospel formed the prevailing subject of conversation;—the establishment of the London Society was probably quoted as an example; and, in consequence of the failure of the plan for delivering lectures at Exeter, it was determined to form a similar society for the West of England. Mr. Kenrick undertook to draw up the Rules and Preamble. These were submitted to a meeting held at Exeter, May 11, 1792, R. H. Clarke, Esq., in the chair. It was then resolved that the Rules and Preamble should be printed,—that the first general meeting of the subscribers should be held at Crediton, September 6, 1792,—and that the Rev. Mr. Toulmin should be desired to preach a sermon on the occasion. These resolutions were carried into effect. Mr. Clarke consented to act as Treasurer, and Mr. Kenrick as Secretary. The sermon was printed and circulated with the rules of the society; it was entitled, "The Character of Christ as the Witness to the Truth"; it excited considerable interest, and has since passed through a second edition.

The Society at the time of its first general meeting consisted of thirty-one members.* For many years the additions were

* *List of the first Members.*

Rev. M. Anstis, Bridport.
Rev. T. Belsham, New College, Hackney.
Mr. W. Browne, Jun., Collumpton.
Mr. Basnett, Bath.
R. H. Clarke, Esq., Bridwell, near Collumpton.
Mr. Davy, Fordton, near Crediton.
Mr. M. Dunsford, Tiverton.

few, and the sphere of the Society's operations limited. These circumstances may be attributed to various causes. There was at that period an unusually strong feeling in favour of "orthodoxy," and especially of the standard set up by the Church of England. Again, many who might have been ranked under the denomination of Unitarian, were not prepared to adopt the principles laid down in the Preamble of the new Society. Although such persons believed that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ was the only proper object of religious worship, and were decidedly opposed to the prominent doctrines of Calvinism, they could not relinquish their belief in the pre-existence of the Saviour, they objected to the terms "mere man," and "simple humanity," as applied to so exalted a being, and they considered the epithet "idolatrous" much too harsh, if not actually unwarrantable, when used in reference to Trini-

Mr. G. Dunsford, Tiverton.
Mr. J. Evans, Exeter.
Rev. J. Isaac, Moreton-Hampstead.
Rev. D. B. Jardine, Bath.
S. Kenrick, Esq., Bewdley, Worcestershire.
Rev. T. Kenrick, Exeter.
Rev. J. Kentish, Plymouth Dock.
Rev. T. Lindsey, Essex Street, London.
Joseph Littlefear, Esq., Exeter.
Rev. T. Morgan, Liskeard.
Rev. S. Morgan, Collumpton.
Samuel Pett, Esq.
Rev. T. Porter, Plymouth.
Rev. T. Reynell, Thorverton.
Mr. W. Reynell, Barnstaple.
W. Rowe, Esq., Spence-Comb, near Crediton.
Rev. J. Rowe, Shrewsbury.
Mr. S. Shute, Collumpton.
Mr. J. Spry, Plymouth.
W. Tayleur, Esq., Shrewsbury.
J. Tingcombe, Esq., Plymouth.
Rev. J. Toulmin, Taunton.
Mr. Tucker, Exeter.
Rev. J. Williams, Bridwell, near Collumpton.

The perusal of this list will excite a melancholy interest in the minds of the survivors, the number of whom, I believe, does not exceed *four*.

tarian worship. On these points they coincided with many gentlemen in various parts of the country, who would have joined the London Unitarian Society, had its Preamble been more comprehensive, and who deeply regretted that, at a time when union was more than ever desirable among all Antitrinitarian Christians, the enlightened founders of the new societies attached so much importance to their own peculiar views of truth.* But the principal cause of the slow progress of the Western Society was the political unpopularity of its members. This was one of those periods when Dissent from the Church was stigmatized as Disaffection to the State; and those Unitarians who followed out the principles of Dissent with the greatest faithfulness received the largest share of public obloquy. The promoters of this society were especially distinguished for their consistent attachment to the cause of Civil and Religious Liberty. Nothing could induce them to swerve from the path of duty. Many of them experienced unremitting insult; year after year they beheld the spirit of persecution which excited the riots at Birmingham gain ground in every part of the kingdom; they saw the Rowans of Ireland and the Muirs of Scotland consigned to dungeons or exiled to foreign lands; they saw their own beloved Priestley, the champion of their cause, "the patriot

* The retaining of the word "idolatrous" in the London Preamble was strongly insisted upon by Mr. Belsham, Mr. Lindsey, Dr. Priestley, Mr. Russell, and Mr. Tayleur, and opposed by many gentlemen of equal eminence in their respective circles, especially by the whole body of Unitarians then existing in the University of Cambridge, who were compelled to withdraw their support from the Society. Among these were the Rev. W. Frend, M.A., formerly Fellow and Tutor of Jesus College, and Vicar of Long Stanton; the Rev. R. Tyrrwhit, M.A., Fellow of Jesus College, and Founder of the Hebrew Scholarships, Cambridge; and Mr. Jones, the celebrated Tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge. Others joined the Society, though they could not approve of the Preamble. Dr. Price, in particular, said he could not suffer an Unitarian society to exist without giving his name to it.

Many years afterwards, Mr. Belsham admitted that it might have been prudent to omit the word "idolatrous," "as the doctrine which the Society desired to hold forth as their common faith, might have been expressed with equal distinctness and precision without it." See BELSHAM'S *Memoirs of Lindsey*, p. 299.

and saint and sage," loaded with calumnies wherever he went, railed at by every class from the drunken brawler of the pot-house to the "heaven-descended" leader of the House of Commons,—assailed from the pulpit by priests who, like Madan, wanted preferment—and from the press by authors who, like Burke, wanted pensions,—and at length driven from the land he loved, to close his existence among strangers;—the promoters of the Western Unitarian Society saw all this, and endured in their own persons more than those who live in the present day can easily imagine; yet they did not falter; they calmly yet earnestly continued to advocate what they believed to be the Truth of God; and, though to worldly men their prospects seemed dark and cheerless, *they had their reward!** But to return—this reward was certainly not found in the rapid progress of Unitarianism in the Western counties. Although the political disturbances of the time did not move such men as Mr. Toulmin and Mr. Kenrick, they alarmed the friends on whom these excellent ministers had reason to rely for support. A striking instance of this was witnessed in the year 1794, in reference to the holding of a meeting of the Society at George's Meeting, Exeter. Mr. Kenrick, the learned and benevolent instructor of the young – the faithful friend and counsellor of all, could not on this occasion obtain for his colleagues the use of his own pulpit. The Trustees refused to allow the Society to meet within

* The lines of Mr. Coleridge, in his "Religious Musings written on Christmas Eve, 1794," have so striking an allusion to the horrors of the time, that, well as they are known, I cannot refrain from quoting them. He had been writing of "the mighty dead,"—of Milton, Newton, and Hartley,—and thus proceeds:

"Pressing on his steps,
Lo! Priestley there, patriot and saint and sage,
Whom that my fleshly eye hath never seen,
A childish pang of impotent regret
Hath thrill'd my heart. Him from his native land
Statesmen blood-stain'd, and priests idolatrous,
By dark lies madd'ning the blind multitude,
Drove with vain hate: calm, pitying he retir'd,
And mus'd expectant on these promis'd years."

the walls of their house of prayer, though the usual notice had been given at the request of one of the ministers. Happily, the admirable sermon of Mr. Reynell,—on *adorning the doctrine* professed by his hearers,—which he delivered by invitation in the Bow Meeting-house, may still be read by all who would know how noble was his object and how groundless were the fears of his opponents. "They misjudged" (says one of the writers I have already quoted) "the temper even of those troublesome times, in apprehending any such danger, and they certainly very much misconceived the motives of the projectors of the plan in question, if they suspected them of any concealed political schemes; but it is not for us, *natis melioribus annis*, harshly to pronounce that the refusal may not have proceeded from conscientious fears of the consequences:—when the love of innovation is inflamed into frenzy, it is not wonderful that prudence is chilled into timidity." *

It was not until some time after the commencement of the present century that the society was much increased. The members assembled regularly, once a year, at the various towns in which there were Unitarian congregations, and a series of sermons were preached and published which proved highly advantageous. Mr. Kenrick, of Exeter, continued to discharge the duties of Secretary until his death in 1804, when the seat of the Society was removed to Bristol, and those duties devolved on the Rev. John Rowe. The unwearied zeal of Mr. Kenrick has already been noticed; and, in 1814, the Society resolved to shew their sense of the value of Mr. Rowe's services through the intervening years, by presenting him with a copy of the Fac-simile of Beza's Manuscript, and (as soon as published) of Mr. Wellbeloved's Bible; this testimonial, however, Mr. Rowe respectfully declined.† The offices of Treasurer and Secretary have since been ably filled by several gentlemen in Bristol, who in conjunction with the Committee have rendered the most valuable aid to the cause of Unitarianism by their selection of books for the annual catalogue, and their arrangements for pro-

* Mon. Repos., Vol. xiii. p. 230. † Ibid., Vol. x. p. 459.

moting the interest and usefulness of the Annual Meetings.* At these meetings the rules of the Society have, from time to time, undergone a slight revision. On one occasion it was resolved to discontinue the admission-fee of ten shillings and sixpence, which is consequently now not paid.

Discussions frequently took place respecting the propriety of altering the Preamble so as to enable the Arians to become members. As early as the year 1811, this subject was taken into consideration at an annual meeting by the suggestion of Dr. Carpenter, an earnest advocate for the proposed comprehension. But no decisive step was taken until the year 1819, when, at a meeting held at Bath, Dr. Carpenter, in accordance with a notice given the preceding year at Ilminster, submitted several resolutions in favour of the object he had in view. The original principle was defended by Mr. Kentish and several other members; and Dr. Carpenter, finding that the disposition of the meeting was against the change, withdrew his proposed resolutions.† When twelve years more had elapsed, the subject was again brought forward at a meeting at Bridgwater, and the alteration agreed to. It was resolved,

"That union with this Society shall henceforwards be considered as implying no more than the reception of the Essential Principles of Unitarianism; viz. the *Personal Unity*, the *Sole Deity*, the *Essential Mercy*, and the *Exclusive Worship* of JEHOVAH, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The additions to the number of members during the first twenty years of the existence of the Society, appear from the lists appended to the annual sermons to be as follow:

In 1792	there were	31.
1798	.....	45.
1804	.....	98.
1812	.....	217.

* The present Treasurer is John Maningford, Esq.; the Secretary, Mr. W. Browne, of Clare Street.

† See Letters by Mr. Frend, Mr. Belsham, and Dr. Carpenter, Mon. Repos., Vol. xiv.

For some years subsequently to 1812, the additions were not proportionably great. The present number of members, though considerable,* is certainly smaller than the number of Unitarians in the West of England would lead a stranger to suppose. It should be mentioned, however, that this body of Christians support two other societies for the promotion of their objects, and especially for establishing a greater bond of union—one in the counties of Dorset and Somerset, formed in 1818, the other for those of Devon and Cornwall, formed in 1813. It should also be mentioned, that during the past year, the Western Society has exhibited considerable vigour; a larger number of new members have been elected than within any preceding year,—even more than the Society was composed of at its first meeting; the funds are in a satisfactory state; the catalogue includes one hundred and eighty-eight valuable books and pamphlets; and those who were present at the annual meeting and listened to the discourses of Mr. Wellbeloved and Mr. Aspland, will not easily forget the spirit that prevailed.

I shall conclude this sketch with a list of the sermons preached before the Society; but the reader will pardon me if I first introduce an extract for the purpose of here placing on record the impressions of "a mind at once zealous and enlightened, philosophical and elegant,"† respecting the progress and prospects of the Society.

"Had not those by whom it was projected been fully persuaded that their cause was of God, and therefore must prosper, they might well have been dismayed by the inauspicious circumstances of its birth and infancy, when the doctrines of the Unity of God could only be avowed by braving the penalties of law, when the civil power looked with jealousy on their association, and when only here and there an individual could be found, who, for the truth's sake, was willing to encounter popular

* I do not exactly know what it is, as neither annual sermon nor list has been published for several years.

† Review of a sermon preached before the Society by the Rev. J. Kenrick. Mon. Rep., Vol. xii. p. 733.

odium. The event has shewn, that manly courage, tempered by Christian prudence, will overcome obstacles, remove prejudices, and conciliate regard, and, in a few years, change opponents into advocates, and enemies into partisans. The seed which was sown beneath so inclement a sky, that it might well have been doubted whether the binder of sheaves should ever fill his bosom with the increase, has shot up with a vigour which removes all fears for the future, the fields have long been green and are rapidly becoming white unto the harvest. You need not, I am sure, my exhortation to recall and to honour the memory of those, who putting their hand to the plough looked not back, but held on their way, and accomplished their work, at the risk of reputation, of usefulness, of property, and of freedom. They indeed laboured, and we, of the present generation, have entered into their labours. O that at the same time we could enter into that zeal for the glory of God, and lively concern for the welfare of men, that unwearied activity in the diffusion of truth, and unshaken fortitude in meeting calumny and danger, which prompted them to undertake their task, and enabled them, under the Divine blessing, to carry it on so far towards its accomplishment."

"Who that beholds the progress which the doctrine of the Unity of God has made in this kingdom, since the period to which I allude, can avoid exclaiming, 'It is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes!' Who that reflects on the simplicity and scriptural authority of this doctrine, and on the inquiring spirit of the age, will think that we indulge the visions of a romantic imagination, in looking forward to its becoming the recognised belief of the Christian church, and, by purifying the gospel from one of its most revolting difficulties, preparing the way for its progress among those nations to whom the popular faith presents insuperable obstacles? It is not indeed for us to know the times and the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power; his kingdom cometh not with observation; and, I believe that the open defection from the doctrines of orthodoxy, extensive and increasing as it is, is far less than the secret and

almost unconscious renunciation of them, especially in those countries where controversy has not roused the spirit of contradiction. The avowal and even the reception of the truth are influenced by a variety of accidental causes; it may be abandoned by those whom we thought most zealously attached to it; the dispensations of Providence may call away its most faithful advocates, ere half their term of years appear to have been completed. We possess the treasure in earthen vessels, but the treasure itself is incorruptible, incapable of waste or destruction. Like a consecrated weapon, truth descends from one generation to another, sometimes wielded by a feebler, sometimes by a more vigorous arm; but its own ethereal temper is unchanged, and its enemies shall continue to feel its penetrative power, till the last of them has resigned the contest. It is mighty, and in this conflict it must prevail; the maxim rests not only on the authority of successive ages of men, who have witnessed its partial accomplishment and transmitted it with the seal of their experience, but on the character and perfections of God, who must design the greatest happiness of his reasonable offspring, and whose power nothing can oppose and prosper."

SERMONS PREACHED BEFORE THE WESTERN UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

Year.	Preacher.	Place.	Subject.	Text.	Published.
1792	Joshua Toulmin, M. A.....	*Crediton*	The Character of Christ as the Witness to the Truth	John xviii. 37.	P.
1793	Timothy Kenrick	*Taunton*	The Parable of the Leaven in the Meal	Matt. xiii. 33.	P.
1794	T. Reynell	*Exeter*.....	Adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour.....	Titus ii. 10.	P.
1795	Thomas Broadhurst	*Plymouth*.....	The Importance of Just Sentiments of God	Acts xvii. 29.	P.
1796	John Kentish.....	*Exeter*.....	The Moral Tendency of the Genuine Christian Doctrine	1 Tim. v. 3.	P.
1797	Joshua Toulmin, M. A.....	*Tiverton*	The Injustice of classing Unitarians with Deists	2 Cor. x. 7.	P.
1798	Jacob Isaac.....	*Collumpton*	The Consolations of Pure Christianity	2 Cor. i. 3, 4.	P.
1799	John Rowe	*Warminster*....	The Disciples called Christians.....	Acts xi. 26.	P.
1800	Thomas Belsham	*Bristol*.....	Freedom of Enquiry	Philipp. iii. 8.	P.
1801	John Prior Estlin, LL. D.	*Bridport*	The Union of Wisdom and Integrity	Matt. x. 16.	P.
1802	Theophilus Browne, M. A.	*Bath*.....	The Necessity of a New Version of the Scriptures	Deut. v. 27.	P.
1803	Job David	*Taunton*	The Wisdom and Benevolence of the Appointment of the Man Christ Jesus	Acts ii. 22.	P.
1804	John Davis	*Moreton-Hamp.*	The Placability of God	Luke vi. 36.	P.
1805	James Hews Bransby	*Gloucester*	The Example of Jesus the Example of a Man.....	1 Peter ii. 21.	P.
1806	Richard Awbrey	*Cirencester*	The power of Man to do the will of God	Philipp. ii. 12.	
1807	Theophilus Browne, M. A.	*Trowbridge*....	The Union of Charity and Knowledge	Philipp. i. 9—11.	
1808	Lant Carpenter, LL. D ...	*Bristol*.....	Errors respecting Unitarianism.....	John xviii. 37.	P.
1809	Edmund Butcher	*Bridgwater*....	Unitarian Claims.....	2 Cor. x. 7.	P.

Year.	Preacher.	Place.	Subject.	Text.	Published.
1810	JOHN ROWE	*Plymouth*.....	The meaning of the appellation Son of God	John xx. 31.	
1811	JOHN KENTISH.....	*Exeter*.....	The Simplicity of the Gospel	1 John v. 1—3.	P.
1812*	ROBERT ASPLAND	*Bridport*	A Vindication of Religious Liberty	Rom. xiv. 5.	P.
1813	THOMAS HOWE.....	*Taunton*	The Influence of Unitarianism in Promoting Happiness and Moral Excellence	John xvii. 20, 21.	
1814	JOSHUA TOULMIN, LL. D. ..	*Yeovil*	The Unitarian Doctrine in accordance with the Declarations of Christ	John xvii. 3.	P.
1815	WILLIAM JOHNSTON FOX ..	*Bristol*.....	A Reply to Popular Objections against Unitarianism.....	Acts xxviii. 22.	P.
1816	JOSEPH HUNTER, F. A. S. ..	*Dorchester*	Scripture the Delight and Guide of the the Unitarian Christian	John xx. 31.	P.
1817	JOHN KENRICK, M.A.....	*Exeter*.....	Unitarianism the Essence of Vital Christianity.....	1 Tim. vi. 2—4.	P.
1818	THOMAS SOUTHWOOD SMITH, M. D.....	*Ilminster*	The Probable Influence of the Development of the Principles of the Human Mind on its Future Progress in Knowledge and Goodness.....	1 Cor. xiv. 20.	P.
1819	THOMAS MADGE	*Bath*.....	The Use of Reason in matters of Religion	1 Cor. xiv. 19.	
1820	WILLIAM HINCKS.....	*Bridgwater*....	The Practical Tendency of the Doctrine of the Simple Humanity of Christ	1 Tim. ii. 5.	P.
1821	LEWIS LEWIS	*Collumpton*	The Influence of Heathen Philosophy on the Doctrines of the Gospel	Col. ii. 8.	P.
1822	LANT CARPENTER, LL. D. ..	*Crediton*	The Scripture Doctrine of Redemption..	Eph. i. 7. †	

* For the titles of several of the printed sermons prior to this date, I am indebted to the Appendix to Mr. Aspland's discourse. I have also to acknowledge the kind assistance of Mr. W. Browne, of Bristol, the respected Secretary of the Society.

† The author's sentiments on this important subject may be found in his widely-circulated work—"*Unitarianism the Doctrine of the Gospel.*"

Year.	Preacher.	Place.	Subject.	Text.	Published.
1823	JOHN KENTISH.....	*Bristol*.....	The mutual relation of the Unity of God and the Humanity of Christ as Doctrines of the Gospel	1 Tim. ii. 5.	P.
1824	HENRY ACTON	*Bridport*	Christ the brightness of the Father's Glory and the Image of His Perfections	Heb. i. 3.	P.
1825	ROBERT ASPLAND	*Trowbridge*....	Causes of the Slow Progress of Christian Truth.....	2 Tim. iii. 7.	P
1826	WILLIAM JOHNSTON FOX ..	*Taunton*	The Right and the Duty of Reasoning on subjects of Religion.....	Acts xviii. 4.	
1827	JOHN GOOCH ROBBERDS....	*Exeter*.....	Christ one with God.....	John x. 30.	P.
1828	HUGH HUTTON, M. A.....	*Yeovil*	An Appeal to Scripture Principles in support of the Claims of Unitarian Christians	2 Cor. x. 7.	P.
1829	JOSEPH HUTTON, LL.D.....	*Bristol*.....	The Devotion of the Spirit and of the Understanding	1 Cor. xiv. 15.	
1830	RUSSELL SCOTT	*Dorchester*	Jesus the Living Bread that came down from Heaven.....	John vi. 51.	P.
1831	HENRY ACTON	*Bridgwater*....	The True Foundations of Joy and Peace in believing	Romans xv. 13.	P.
1832	ROBERT ASPLAND	*Bath*.....	The Divine Dispensations a Series of Moral Discipline	Gal. iii. 24.	P.
1833	ROBERT BROOK ASPLAND, M.A.....	*Crewkerne*	The love of Religious Truth and the dispositions that interfere with it.....	John xviii. 37.	
1834	SAMUEL BACHE	*Exeter*.....	The Simplicity and Efficacy of Christian Faith	Romans x. 9.	
1835	CHARLES WELLBELOVED ..	*Gloucester* ...	Reasons for thinking *soberly* of Human Nature	Romans xii. 3.	

INDEX.

ACADEMIES AND COLLEGES:
Aberdeen, 68, 519
Abergavenny, 153
Bridgwater, 172, 178, 179, 223
Bridport, 237
Bristol, 59, 80, 207, 321
Cambridge, 16, 20, 60, 147, 486
Carmarthen, 58, 160, 161, 216, 237, 310, 339, 494, 524
Colyton, 170, 335
Daventry, 31, 153, 183, 218, 237, 310, 325, 437, 459, 516
Dublin, Trinity College, 14
Edinburgh, 16, 202, 209, 260
Exeter, 10, 162, 169, 367, 388, 434, 441, 446, 449, 473, 488, 492
Findern, 172, 224
Glasgow, 39, 43, 128, 173, 222, 410
Hackney, 94, 131, 149, 161, 518
Harvard, N. E., 14, 151, 204
Homerton, 33, 153
Hoxton, 79, 131, 216, 261, 328, 340, 356, 360, 449
Islington—Mr. Doolittle's, 112, 152
Kendal, 477
London—Dr. Jennings's, 79, 203, 275
London University, 506
Mr. Rowe's, 41
Mr. Spademan's, 105
Mr. Aspland's, 474
Manchester, 446 (see York)
Northampton, 64, 189, 216, 237, 244, 246, 325, 356, 492, 512
Oxford, 16, 91, 185, 186, 274, 288, 298, 376, 414, 418, 508, 509, 541
Rhode Island, N. E., 204
Shepton Mallet, 168, 170
Stratford-upon-Avon, 475
Swansea, 519
Taunton, 9, 10, 90, 151, 168, 172, 194, 198, 208, 234, 235, 320, 325, 432, 475, 490
Tiverton, 67
Trowbridge, 73
Utrecht, 422
Warrington, 128
Wickham-Brook, 103
York, 120, 149, 183, 184, 198, 219, 242, 263, 282, 296, 348, 408, 524
Acton, H., Exeter, 409
His pupils, 10, 184
Acts of Parliament, notices of:
Act of Uniformity, 6, 28, 98, 138, 253, 332, 372
Conventicle Act, 376, 377, 380
Oxford, or Five-Mile Act, 24, 29, 221, 241, 298
Toleration Act, 213, 471
Adams, P., Honiton, 320, 324
Adams, T., Marshfield, 40
Lympstone, 358
Addey, R., Gloucester, 9

Aikin, Dr., quoted, 513
Alsop, W., Ilminster, 230
Amory, Dr., Taunton, 198, 208
Andrews, N., Warminster, 91, 93
Anstis, M., Colyton, 336, 339
Armstrong, E., Bath, 141
Ashwick congregation, 156
Aspland, R. B., Bristol, 115
Association for Devon and Cornwall,
Dorset and Somerset,
Gloucester, Somerset, and Wilts, 39, 51
Astley, R. Gloucester, 10
Atkins, R., Exeter, 376, 414
Atkey, A., Shepton, 167
Awbrey, R., Gloucester, 10
Aycrigg, B., Shepton, 168

Baker, S., Bridport, 260
Baker, T., Sidmouth, 349
Ball, J., Honiton, 316
Baptist Societies, 71, 192, 317, 460
History of, in England, 463
Baptism, adult, by a Presbyterian, 180
Barker, T., Bradford, 64
Bartlett, E., Yeovil, 214, 220
Bartlett, J. P., Topsham, 368
Bates, S., Warminster, 89
Bath congregation, 138
Batson, E., Taunton, 198
Ilminster, 231, 234
Batten, Mr., Colyton, 335
Bayley, J., Warminster, 91
Beeby, Mr., Cirencester, 25
Benn, W., Dorchester, 266, 274
Bennett, A., Poole, 296
Berry, B., Topsham, 367
Berry, J., Sidmouth, 345
Crediton, 459
Bidle, J., Gloucester, 5
Billingsley, N., Ashwich, 157, 161
Billingsley, S., Bradford, 64
Blake, M., Honiton, 244, 315
Blake, W., Crewkerne, 242, 244
Blake, W., Jun., Yeovil, 217
Crewkerne, 242, 244
Blatchford, S., Topsham, 368
Bourn, S., Calne, 56, 60
Bowen, T., Ilminster, 234, 237
Bradford congregation, 64
Bransby, J. H., Moreton, 473
Bretland, J., Exeter, 402, 445
Quoted, 493
Brett, H., Plymouth, 503
Bridgwater congregation, 176
Bridport congregation, 252
Bridwell chapel, 305, 559
Bristol congregation, 99
Broadhurst, T., Bath, 148
Taunton, 199
Brock, G. B., Gloucester, 10
Browne, J., Sidmouth, 345
Browne, Simon, 167, 172
Browne, T., Gloucester, 10, 16
Warminster, 92
Browne, W. S., Bridgwater, 183
Buckler, J., Warminster, 87, 92
Burgess, T., Taunton, 192
Burnet, Bishop, quoted, 468, 469
Bury, S., Bristol, 107, 109
Butcher, E., Sidmouth, 347, 350
Butcher, Mr., Warminster, 89
Butler, H., Yeovil, 213

Calamy, Dr., Journey to the West, 501
Calderwood, D., Shepton, 166
Calne congregation, 56
Carel, R., Crediton, 455
Carpenter, Dr., Bristol, 115
Exeter, 408
Chandler, H., Bath, 152
Chapman, T., Collumpton, 309
Chapman, W., Sidmouth, 350
Chaplyn, Mr., Wareham, 278
Charles II., Declaration of Indulgence, 378, 380
Resisted in New England, 14

Cheltenham congregation, 20
Cirencester congregation, 24
Clarke, H., Frenchay, 51
Clarke, Mr., Wareham, 278
Cock, J., Plymouth, 503
Cogan, E., Cirencester, 26
Coleman, Dr., Bath, 139, 151
Collier, J., Crewkerne, 242
Collier, J., Moreton, 470, 477
Collier, T., Taunton, 192
Collins, T., Ilminster, 231
Bridport, 254
Collumpton congregation, 302
Colyton congregation, 332
Coombe, Mr., Bradford, 65
Cooper, D., Topsham, 367
Cooper, T., Moreton, 473
Cornish, J., Colyton, 336, 340
Cornish Unitarians, 534
Crabb, H., Cirencester, 26, 30
Cranch, J., Ilminster, 234, 236
Crediton congregation, 454
Cree, R., Bridport, 260
Crellius, quoted, 401
Crewkerne congregation, 240
Crosby, quoted, 467
Crompton, W., Collumpton, 302, 309
Cropper, J., Exeter, 410
Cumming, J., Shepton, 166, 170
Cure, J., Trowbridge, 73

Dangerfield, Mr., Bradford, 64, 88
David, Job, Taunton, 198, 207
Davies, Dr., Taunton, 198
Crediton, 459
Davies, Evan, Poole, 294
Davis, R., Marshfield, 41
Davis, J., Calne, 58
Davis, J., Collumpton, 306, 310
Davisson, J., Trowbridge, 71
Denham, J., Gloucester, 9
Devon and Cornwall Assembly, 548
Devonport congregation, 528
Diaper, J., Bristol, 107
Dickenson, J., Gloucester, 10
Dissenters, sufferings of, 87, 176, 187, 213, 240, 268, 377, 382
Dixon, A., Cirencester, 26
Dorchester congregation, 266
Dowdell, B., Tavistock, 488
Downe, R., Bridport, 252
Drewitt, R., Bridport, 253

Eaton, W., Bridport, 252
Edwards, A., Dorchester, 271
Edwards, J., Trowbridge, 71
Edwards, J., Crediton, 459
Edwards, J., Honiton, 315
Edwards, T., Tavistock, 494
Exeter, 402
Elson, J., Poole, 295
Emlyn, Mr., 401
Enty, J., Exeter, 403
Plymouth, 500
Estlin, Dr., Bristol, 114, 127
Evans, D., Marshfield, 39
Evans, D., Devonport, 527
Evans, E., Trowbridge, 71
Evans, J., Ashwick, 160
Shepton, 169
Evans, J., Cirencester, 25
Evans, J., Ilminster, 234, 237
Evans, J., Marshfield, 39
Bradford, 65
Evans, R., Collumpton, 302
Evans, W., Bridgwater, 182
Tavistock, 488
Eveliegh, J., Crediton, 459
Exeter congregation, 372
controversy in 1717, 388, 502: in 1814, 409
Effects of, 158, 179, 304

Falmouth and Flushing congregations, 536
Fawcett, S., Yeovil, 217. His exertions at Bridport, 255

Fenner, J. L., Taunton, 198
Ferguson, R., anecdote of, 385
Flamanck, H., Tavistock, 487
Flexman, Dr., Bradford, 64, 67
Crediton, 456
Follett, J., Topsham, 368
Foot, J., Bradford, 64
Foot, W., Moreton, 469, 475
Fones, S., Lympstone, 354
Forbes, J., Gloucester, 8, 16
Forsbrey, J., Frenchay, 57
Foster, Dr. J., 158
Fox, Charles James, quoted, 194, 267
Fox, J., of Plymouth, quoted, 268, 388, 426, 491, 501
Frank, J., Bath, 140
Freeman, S., Honiton, 321
French Revolution and the persecution of Dissenters, 304
Frenchay congregation, 48
Fry, R., Cirencester, 26
Furber, Mr., Cheltenham, 20
Furze, W., Exeter, 403

Gardener, J., Bridgwater, 177
Gaylard, R., Exeter, 412
Gibbs, S., Devonport, 528
Gibson, Mr., Sidmouth, 349
Gill, J., Colyton, 333
Gisburne, J., Trowbridge, 78, 81
Glass, R., Yeovil, 215
Collumpton, 309
Gloucester congregation, 4
Goswell, Mr., Honiton, 315
Gough, S., Bristol, 106
Gough, W., Warminster, 86
Graham, D., Yeovil, 216
Green, J., Exeter, 404
Gregory, A., Cirencester, 24, 28
Griffith, J., Frenchay, 49
Grosvenor, Dr., London, 10
Grove, H., Taunton, 194
Gummer, J., Ilminster, 234, 237

Hallet, J., Bridport, 252
Exeter, 376, 415
Hallet, J. *(Second)*, Exeter, 386, 388
Hallet, J. *(Third)*, Exeter, 401, 402
Hallet, Mr., Crewkerne, 242
Hammond, G., Taunton, 193
Dorchester, 266
Hancock, T., Lympstone, 355
Harding, Mr., Falmouth, 540
Harding, N., Plymouth, 498, 510
Hardy, S., Poole, 288, 297
Harriss, J. R., Ilminster, 234, 237
Harrison, R., Taunton, 200, 202
Moreton, 470
Harson, D., Moreton, 473
Hartford, E., Taunton, 194
Harwood, P., Bridport, 260
Hawkes, H., Marshfield, 39
Hayes, J., Ilminster, 234, 237
Hayward, S., Poole, 293
Hazlitt, W., Marshfield, 43
Hazlitt, W., Jun., quoted, 45
Heath, G., Honiton, 316
Heineken, N. S., Collumpton, 307
Sidmouth, 350
Herbert, E., Ashwick, 160
Hincks, W., Exeter, 409. Quoted, 448
Hinton, G. P., Marshfield, 39
Crediton, 459
Hodge, Dr. J., Gloucester, 9
Hogg, J., Sidmouth, 347
Exeter, 402 Crediton, 457
Holt, J., Cirencester, 26, 33
Crediton, 459
Honiton congregation, 314
Hook, Mr., Collumpton, 309
Hooper, —, Exeter, 412
Hoppin, —, Exeter, 412
Horsfield, F., Cirencester, 26
Horsfield, T. W., Taunton, 200
Horsham, W., Topsham, 367
Hort, Dr. J., Marshfield, 37, 41
Hort, W. J., Frenchay, 50
Crediton, 457
Houson, H., Bridgwater, 183
Howe, T., Bridport, 254, 261

Howel, J., Bridgwater, 182
Yeovil, 216 Poole, 292
Hughes, D., Yeovil, 219, 226
Hughes, G., Plymouth, 496
Hughes, J., Honiton, 321, 328
Hughes, W., Sidmouth, 347
Hunt, W., Yeovil, 230
Hunter, J., Bath, 149

Ilminster congregation, 230
Independent congregations origin of:
Bath, 143
Bridport, 254
Exeter, 374
Gloucester, 11
Honiton, 316
Taunton, 194
Warminster, 90
Inscriptions on Communion Cups at Plymouth, 498
Foundation Stone at Marshfield, 37
Mr. Baxter's Works at Yeovil, 215
Pulpit at Trowbridge, 72
Summer-house at Ashwick, 159
Tablets (see Monumental)
Isaac, J., Moreton, 474, 479

Jacob, N., Plymouth, 498, 509
James, W., Bridgwater, 184
Sidmouth, 348
James II., his Declaration of Indulgence, 15, 315
Hypocrisy towards the Church of England, 268
Persecution of the Dissenters, 382
Attempts to restore Popery, 378
Jardine, D., Bath, 147, 153
Jeffrey, T., Exeter, 402
Jeffries, Judge, 267
Jeffries, J., Taunton, 200, 201
Jeffries, J., Topsham, 368
Jenkins, J., Yeovil, 219
Jeremy, T., Ilminster, 234
Jervis, J., Lympstone, 355, 362
Jervis, T., Lympstone, 355, 360
Quoted, 447
Jillard, P., Crediton, 456
Tavistock, 488
Jillard, Peard, Shepton, 171
Johns, J., Crediton, 459
Jones, D., Trowbridge, 74, 80
Jones, J., Bridgwater, 183
Jones, Dr. J., Plymouth, 504, 518
Jones, J., Plymouth, 505, 524
Jones, T., Calne, 56

Keech, J., Ilminster, 234, 236
Keeling, John, Cirencester, 25
Kell, Mr., Wareham, 279
Kenn, Major, quoted, 100
Kenrick, J., quoted, 557, 565
Kenrick, T., Exeter, 406, 437
Kentish, John, Plymouth, 505
Devonport, 526
Kentish, Joseph, Bristol, 103
Kerridge, J., Colyton, 333
Kettle, J., Dorchester, 270
Kiddel, B., Shepton, 170
Sidmouth, 345
King, Mr., Ashwick, 160
Kings, John, Cirencester, 26
Knight, R., Crewkerne, 241

Lacy, J., Sidmouth, 345
Lamb, T., Dorchester, 271, 275
Lamport, W., Honiton, 317
Lamport, W., Jun., Poole, 294
Larkham, T., Tavistock, 483
Lavington, J., Exeter, 386
Lawes, J., Trowbridge, 71
Lay preaching at Moreton, 474

Letters from
Bury, Mr., to his flock, 109
Butler, Mr., to a Country Dissenter, 378
Collier, Mr., to the Taunton Baptists, 192
Collumpton congregation to Mr. Evans, 303
Pope, Mr., to the Lewin's Mead society, 107
Lewis, D., Frenchay, 49
Ashwick, 160
Lewis, J., Crediton, 459
Lewis, L., Dorchester, 271
Crediton, 459
Libraries, Academical:
Exeter, 10
Taunton, 10
Trowbridge, 73
Lines by a popular Poet, 545
Rev. E. Butcher, 352
Rev. E. Jervis, 362
Rev. H. Moore, 514
T. Moore, Esq., 483
To the memory of Mr. Davis, 312
Mr. Coleridge, 562
Liturgy, reasons for introducing, 257
used in Presbyterian chapels, 13, 65, 256, 402, 410, 506
Lobb, Dr., Yeovil, 215, 221
Lord's Supper regulations, 405
Lucas, T., Trowbridge, 71
Lush, W., Warminster, 90, 180
Lympstone congregation, 354

Mackintosh, Sir J., quoted, 87
Madgwick, W., Poole, 216
Manning, J., Exeter, 406, 448
Quoted, 550, 551
Manston, J., Lympstone, 355
Manton, Dr., Colyton, 332
Mardon, B., his Pupil, 506
Marriages, solemnized by a Nonconformist, 499
Marshall, J., Yeovil, 216
Marshall, T. and N., Ilminster, 231
Marshfield congregation, 36
Martin, M., Lympstone, 355
Martin, S., Marshfield, 40
Bradford, 66
Martyn, S., Plymouth, 496
Martyn, T., Plymouth, 496
Mather, Dr., Gloucester, 7, 14
Matthew, G. F., Colyton, 338
Maurice, M., Frenchay, 50
Sidmouth, 348
Maurice, Mortimer, Bridgwater, 184
Maynard, J., Honiton, 317, 324
Melhuish, J., Calne, 57
Merivale, S., Tavistock, 488, 492
Milner, Dr., Yeovil, 215, 223
Mitchelson, J., Poole, 296
Monmouth, Duke of, notices of his Rebellion, 8, 101, 193, 194, 244 253, 267, 384
Montreal, Unitarianism at, 227
Monumental inscriptions:
Amory, Thomas, 210
Atkey, Anthony, 167
Blake, William, 243
Blake, William, Jun., 243
Browne, Simon, 167
Browne, Theophilus, 147
Collier, John, 470
Cornish, Joseph, 338
Davis, John, 308
Estlin, John Prior, 126
Evans, David, 41
Evans, Richard, 308
Foot, William, 475
Forbes, James, 9
Heineken, Mrs., 308
Holt, James, 34
Howe, Thomas, 256
Howse, Henry Edward, 146
Jones, Daniel, 78
Jones, Dr. J., 524
Kings, Mr. and Mrs., 27
Morgan, Samuel, 307
Morgan, Mrs., 308
Osler, Thomas, 182

Peirce, James, 411, 430
Stephenson, Joseph, 291
Thomas, Evan, 41
Waldron, William, 78
Watson, Thomas, 182
Webb, Francis, 327
Wright, Thomas, 125
Wright, John, 126
Moore, H., Plymouth, 503
Moore, H., Jun., Liskeard, 511
Moore, J., Bridgwater, 177, 186
Moore, J., Jun., Bridgwater, 178
Morell, Dr., his pupil, 409
Moreton congregations, 462
Morgan, S., Collumpton, 304, 309
Mosheim, quoted, 465
Murch, J., Bath, 150

Neal, quoted, 542
Newton, G., Taunton, 193
Nightingale, quoted, 102
Noon, J., Ilminster, 234, 237
Norman, J., Bridgwater, 176, 185
Nowell, B., Dorchester, 268

Odgers, W., Plymouth, 504. Quoted, 532
Ordination, sentiments on, 163, 346, 431, 499
Ordination services, 147, 294, 340, 345, 363
Owen, J., Yeovil, 219

Palk, W., Sidmouth, 345
Parry, J., Cirencester, 26, 29
Parminster, R., Ilminster, 234, 237
Parr, J., Moreton, 473
Paterson, Mr., Marshfield, 36
Peirce, J., Exeter, 386, 421. Quoted, 387, 389, 393, 400
Penn, W., Warminster, 88
Pearse, Mr., Tavistock, 487
Perrot, S., Yeovil, 216
Phillips, S., Jun., Dorchester, 271
Phillips, S., Poole, 292
Philp, Mr., Falmouth, 537
Pitts, A., Topsham, 367
Plymouth congregation, 496
Poole congregation, 288
Pope, M., Bristol, 106
Pope, J., Crediton, 455
Porter, T., Plymouth, 508
Presbyterianism prevalent
at Bristol, 101
Exeter, 374
Presbyterian congregations, causes of their decline, 140, 293
Presbyterians intolerant towards Bidle, 5
Priestley, Dr., addresses to, 407, 553
His Sermons used at Cheltenham, 21
Known to Rev. W. Hazlitt, 44
Sons educated at Frenchay, 50
Residence at Calne, 58
General unpopularity, 561
Prince of Orange, his reception at Exeter, 384

Queen Anne's Bounty, 161
Queen Adelaide's visit to Oxford, 419

Read, J., Cirencester, 26
Read, Mr., Bradford, 64
Retired places, zeal of Nonconformists in, 156, 333, 214
Reynell, J., Plymouth, 504, 515
Reynell, T., Crediton, 458, 459
Reynolds, J., Gloucester, 9
Richards, W., Bristol, 113
Risdon, quoted, 484
Roberts, G., Warminster, 91
Rosewell, J., Colyton, 338
Rowe, J., Bristol, 115, 131

Rowe, T., Poole, 292
Rowland, J., Moreton, 473
Rowntree, M., Poole, 296
Rowswell, R., Calne, 56
Russell, House of, 482
Rutter, J., Honiton, 316

Sacheverell, his partisans at Bristol, 102
Sandercock, J., Tavistock, 487, 490
Saunders, Mr., Honiton, 135
Schools, Bristol, 121 Plymouth, 507
Seal, G., Marshfield, 36
Seaward, R., Poole, 292
Lympstone, 357
Seyer, quoted, 100, 102
Shapland, A., Marshfield, 36
Shepton congregation, 166
Sherman, Dr., Shepton, 171
Sherwill, N., Plymouth, 497
Short, A., Topsham, 366
Short, S., Colyton, 333
Shute, H., Shepton, 170
Sidmouth congregation, 344
Simpson, J., Bath, 145
Skey, G., Colyton, 338
Slater, S., Colyton, 335
Smethurst, J., Moreton, 473
Smith, J., Colyton, 338
Smith, I., Sidmouth, 350
Smith, Dr. S., Yeovil, 218
Smith, S., Cirencester, 25
Soreton, F., Honiton, 314
South, C., Warminster, 86, 93
Southwick congregation, 71, 76, 478
Spademan, Mr., 104, 105
Sparke, A., 472
Spencer, B., Dorchester, 270
Squire, H., Wareham, 282
Starr, B., Topsham, 367
Stevenson, J., Crewkerne, 240
Stevenson, Dr. B., Bath, 140
Sidmouth, 344
Stogdon, H., 162
Strong, J., Ilminster, 231, 235
Stuckley, L., Exeter, 373, 413
Sutton, W., Bridport, 254

Taplin, J., Honiton, 324
Colyton, 337
Tapper, S., Lympstone, 354, 359
Taunton congregation, 192
Tavistock congregation, 482
Abbey, account of, 484
Taylor, Mr., Calne, 59
Taylor, C., Bath, 138, 151
Taylor, J., Ilminster, 234, 237
Tea Meetings, Bristol, 118
Teggin, J. G., Taunton, 200
Bridport, 264
Terry, H., Moreton, 469
Thomas, E., Marshfield, 37
Thomas, S., Frenchay, 50
Thomas, S., Yeovil, 215
Thomas, Mr., Wareham, 279
Thomas, Mr., Moreton, 470
Tidcombe, J., Gloucester, 9, 25
Tingcombe, J., Frenchay, 51
Bridgwater, 183
Plymouth, 508
Tomkins, Mr., Crewkerne, 24
Totness congregation, 369
Toulmin, Dr., Taunton, 196, 203
Colyton, 335
Towgood, Matt., Bridgwater, 178, 188
Towgood, Matt., Shepton, 168, 170
Poole, 292 Colyton, 335
Towgood, Micaijah, Exeter, 404, 432
Crediton, 458
Moreton, 473
Towgood, S., Topsham, 367
Exeter, 404
Tozer, A., Exeter, 406
Tremlett, J., Gloucester, 10
Trelawny, Sir H., Memoir of, 543
Tremlett, T., Warminster, 91
Trosse, G., Exeter, 376, 416. Quoted, 383

Trowbridge congregation, 70
Turner, T., Lympstone, 355
Twining, T., Trowbridge, 74, 79
Tyler, J., Frenchay, 49

Wallace, Mr., Wareham, 285
Waldron, W., Trowbridge, 73
Walker, S., Crewkerne, 242
Walrond, J., Exeter, 405
Warren, M., Taunton, 194
Ward, J., Taunton, 197
Yeovil, 215, 224
Wareham congregation, 278
Warminster congregation, 86
Waters, G., Bridport, 254
Waterhouse, B., Warminster, 91
Watson, T., Bridgwater, 170, 189
Watson, T., Jun., Plymouth
Bath 145
Watts, G., Crediton, 459
Wawne, G. B., Bridport, 260, 263
Webb, N., Calne, 56
Weeks, J., Bristol, 99
Webb, F., Honiton, 320, 325
Wesley, J., Poole, 290, 298
West, W., Ilminster, 232
Sidmouth, 345
Exeter, 402
Western Unitarian Society, 556
Wheeler, Mr., Honiton, 320
Whinnel, T., Taunton, 200, 201
Whiston, W., 389, 401, 424
Whitfield, E., Ilminster, 234
Williams, E., Calne, 58
Bradford, 65
Williams, W., Ilminster, 234, 237
Williams, D., Exeter, 402
Wilkins, J., Colyton, 332
Wilson, W., Crewkerne, 242
Withers, J., Exeter, 386
Woolcombe, R., Moreton, 471, 475
Worsley, I., Plymouth, 504. Quoted, 199
Worth, S., Cirencester, 25
Wright, R., Bradford, 65
Trowbridge, 75. Quoted, 539
Wright, T., Bristol, 114.

Yeates, M. L., Collumpton, 307
Sidmouth, 348
Yeovil congregation, 212
Youatt, W., Colyton, 335

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